

# PROGRAMME 2008



## MADAMA BUTTERFLY

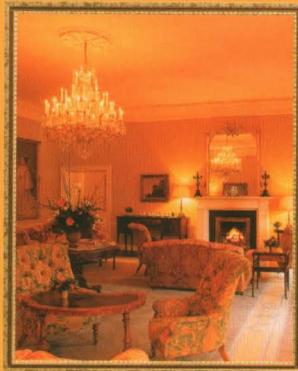
Giacomo Puccini



## A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

Benjamin Britten





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# WELCOME

On behalf of the Chairman, Board of Directors, and all of us in Opera Ireland, you are very welcome to the evening's performance and to this Winter's pairing of *Madama Butterfly* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

The making of professional opera is a miracle of teamwork, and cannot be done without the participation and support of a large number of organisations and individuals. I would like to take this opportunity to express our thanks to all of those who have helped in their various ways to make this season's performances.

In particular, I would like to express thanks to the Arts Council and its parent Government Department of Arts Sport and Tourism for the core funding of the company. Opera Ireland is also grateful for the strong and valued support of RTÉ and the Irish Times as principal sponsors, and we are also grateful to Bank of Ireland Private Banking, BMW and Strata 3 for their performance sponsorship, and the large number and range of other associate sponsors listed in the programme.

I would also like to thank three vital groups of individuals: the many members of the Opera Ireland Opera Circle, a wonderful group of individuals whose dedicated support is crucial to the development of the company; the army of creative talent, performing artists and technical crew who realise the operatic vision on the stage; and finally, you, the audience. You are the life's-blood of opera, the reason for it being written and performed and an essential ingredient in making the magic of the live performance.

I hope you enjoy and are moved by tonight's performance, and that we will see you again very soon.

**Niall Doyle**

*Chief Executive*

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ANTHONY MINGHELLA'S PRODUCTION OF MADAMA BUTTERFLY. PHOTO: KEN HOWARD/METROPOLITAN OPERA

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- Nov 22 Berlioz **LA DAMNATION DE FAUST** at 6pm
- Dec 20 Massenet **THAÏS** at 5pm
- Jan 10 Puccini **LA RONDINE** at 6pm
- Jan 24 Gluck **ORFEO ED EURIDICE** at 6pm
- Feb 7 Donizetti **LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR** at 6pm
- Mar 7 Puccini **MADAMA BUTTERFLY** at 6pm
- Mar 21 Bellini **LA SONNAMBULA** at 5pm
- May 2 Rossini **LA CENERENTOLA** at 5.30pm

# ARTISTIC DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Dear friends,

To commemorate Giacomo Puccini's 150th birthday, we welcome you to his most popular and most often performed opera, *Madama Butterfly*.



It is the devastating story of a passionate love between two worlds and an encounter of cultures with a deadly end. In spite of globalisation, accessibility of foreign countries and foreign cultures, the story still finds our interest, it moves us today, maybe more than ever.

Korean soprano Yunah Lee has sung the role of Cio-Cio San in many major opera houses around the world and now makes her debut with Opera Ireland. Several singers in the cast such as Marcel Vanaud, Keith Olsen and Roberto Covatta are well known to our audiences.

After his triumph with our production of *Turandot* last year, Italian Maestro Bruno Dal Bon returns to conduct the RTÉ Concert Orchestra. This very accurate, atmospheric and extremely theatrical production by Eike Gramss, Christoph Wagenknecht and Catherine Voeffray was first produced for the Teatro del Giglio in Lucca, Puccini's birthplace.

*A Midsummer Night's Dream* is probably Benjamin Britten's most enchanting opera. It is completely faithful to the spirit of the original text and certainly one of the most successful adaptations of a Shakespearean play for the opera stage. I have no doubt that its spellbinding atmosphere will have an effect on you. Immediately, the first few bars of this wonderful score will transport you to a unique dreamlike world.

With another Irish Première, a predominantly Irish cast in a uniquely "Irish" production and interpretation by the award winning team David Bolger, Monica Frawley and conducted by Stewart Robertson (see "Fairies, Changelings and Lost Children" article by Vincent Woods on page 35) we show that opera is relevant in this country and in this society. Opera Ireland enables Irish artists to create opera for an Irish audience.

In times when money, funds and shares diminish or even vanish, we should invest in culture and in art. Culture and art will not lose value. It will stay with you, it will nourish you and it will grow with you. It can be your consolation, your good companion, your conscience, your richness and your happiness. Come and listen to the music, come and see the theatre.

Thank you for your time, it is well invested!

**Dieter Kaegi**  
Artistic Director  
Opera Ireland

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*Sean Green, Managing Director  
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# MADAMA BUTTERFLY



Giacomo Puccini



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*presents*

## MADAMA BUTTERFLY

**Giacomo Puccini**

*Sung in Italian with English Surtitles*

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SET DESIGNER	Christoph Wagenknecht
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**Surtite Translation** David Edwards  
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Production from Teatro del Giglio, Lucca, Italy

## CAST

CIO-CIO SAN (BUTTERFLY)	Yunah Lee
SUZUKI	Qiu Lin Zhang
PINKERTON	Keith Olsen
SHARPLESS	Marcel Vanaud
GORO	Roberto Covatta
THE BONZE	Eric Martin-Bonnet
PRINCE YAMADORI	Brendan Collins
KATE PINKERTON	Mary Flaherty
YAKUSIDE	Lorcan O'Byrne
IMPERIAL COMMISSIONER	Brendan Collins
REGISTRAR	Billy Kilkenny
AUNT	Katy Kelly
COUSIN	Debboragh Abbott
MOTHER	Michaela Chirvase
BUTTERFLY'S CHILD	Allanah Kaegi Mark Louis Pabilona



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*Sharpless warns Pinkerton that the girl, who goes by the name Madama Butterfly, is taking the affair seriously, but he laughs and says that one day he will marry a real American bride.*

# PUCCINI: MADAMA BUTTERFLY

## THE PLOT AT A GLANCE

**T**he entire action of the opera takes place in a villa on a hillside overlooking Nagasaki harbour. At the start of Act I, US naval officer Benjamin Franklin Pinkerton tells Sharpless, the American Consul, how the go-between Goro has brokered a 'marriage' for him with a young geisha called Cio-Cio-San. Sharpless warns him that the girl, who goes by the name Madama Butterfly, is taking the affair seriously, but he laughs and says that one day he will marry a real American bride. Cio-Cio-San enters with her relations, whom she introduces to Pinkerton. In an aside, she tells him she has been to the Christian mission and will embrace her husband's religion. Then she displays her very few possessions, but is strangely coy about a certain ornamental sword. Goro tells Pinkerton that it is the one with which her father dispatched himself on the orders of the Mikado. The 'wedding' ceremony begins, but is interrupted by a fanatical Bonze who curses Cio-Cio-San for abandoning her faith. Left to themselves, the young couple indulge in mutual expressions of love; she with tenderness, he with increasingly impatient lust.

ACT 2: Three years pass. Pinkerton has gone home, but the credulous Butterfly assures her servant, Suzuki, that he will come back soon. Sharpless has received a letter informing him that Pinkerton will be bringing his American wife to Japan soon and asking him to break the news to Butterfly. But she is so overjoyed at the sight of the letter and the news that her husband is returning that he cannot bring himself to impart the rest of the contents. After Butterfly has dismissed a wealthy suitor, Yamadori, Sharpless suggests that maybe Pinkerton has forgotten her. She refutes the idea and produces her child, a fair-haired little boy. A cannon shot announces the arrival of Pinkerton's ship. Butterfly and Suzuki excitedly decorate the house with flowers and settle down with the child to wait.

ACT 3: Morning dawns and Pinkerton has not shown up. Exhausted from her all night vigil, Butterfly retires. Pinkerton finally arrives with his wife Kate and the Consul. He is filled with remorse and rushes away, leaving Sharpless and Kate to arrange taking the child back to America. Left alone, Butterfly takes out the sword with which her father committed suicide, choosing to die with honor rather than live in shame. She is interrupted momentarily when the child comes in, but Butterfly says goodbye to him and blindfolds him. Finally, she commits hara-kiri, and falls lifeless at the feet of the returning Pinkerton.



# PUCCINI'S GEISHA

**M**adama Butterfly is one of that select group of operatic masterpieces to have survived disastrous opening nights. Mind you, if the La Scala audience on that fraught evening of 17 February 1904 had been familiar with the music of Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*, composed two years earlier, they might not have been as shocked by Giacomo Puccini's innovative scoring as they appear to have been. But then these things always appear more simple in retrospect. As it was, a public which had accepted the romantic melodies of *Manon Lescaut*, *La Bohème* and *Tosca* with open arms was so nonplussed by the new opera that it reacted with shouting and booing so loud that much of the music went unheard.

The opera was immediately withdrawn and replaced by a hastily put-together revival of Gounod's *Faust*. But Puccini remained obdurate and loyal to his faith in the viability of what he had written. He did, however, allow himself to be persuaded by some of his intimates to take another look at the structure of the work with a view to making a few minor alterations. He excised some of the minor characters' pseudo-oriental music, extended the tenor role – adding the aria "Addio fiorito asil" – and, most significantly, divided the long second act into two parts. And it was in this revised three-act format that the opera triumphed at its second premiere in Brescia three months later. The ovation the opera received on that evening of 28 May 1904, ironically given by an audience filled with opera-goers who had travelled from Milan for the occasion, was soon repeated in opera houses all around the world.

Puccini first encountered *Madame Butterfly* when he attended David Belasco's play of the same name in London in 1900. Although he probably understood very little of the English text, he could see operatic potential in the tale of a geisha who allows herself to be 'bought' by a foreigner in the naive belief that her 'marriage' to him is for real. Belasco, in turn, had adapted an original story by John Luther Long and it was from a combination of both sources that Luigi Illica drew up the scenario for the opera.

The events depicted in the opera come from a variety of backgrounds. There have been countless real-life Cio-Cio-Sans, oriental women who went through a form of marriage, however temporary, with foreign men. Some of these happenings have been documented. There was a geisha called Tsuru Yamamura who participated in an

Puccini could see operatic potential in the tale of a geisha who allows herself to be 'bought' by a foreigner in the naive belief that her 'marriage' to him is for real.



*Even by his own high standards, Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* is unstintingly generous in matters of flowing melody, harmony and orchestral texture.*



'arranged' marriage to a US naval officer, bore him a son, and found herself deserted when her 'husband' decamped back across the Pacific. Unlike her operatic counterpart, however, this lady lived on to the age of 45. Another supposedly true story concerns a geisha who bore a son to an English merchant called Glover. In this instance the deserted girl tried to commit suicide but failed. In later life her son became friends with a sister of John Luther Long.

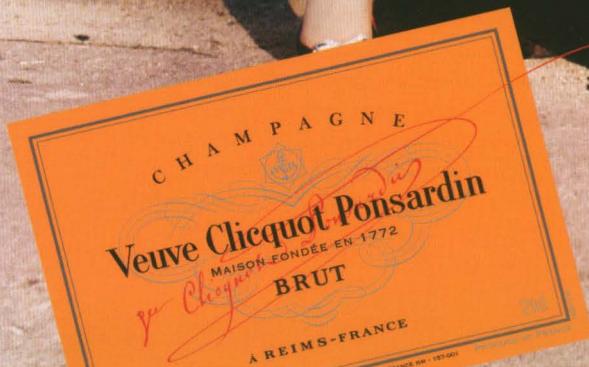
Earlier, in 1887, Pierre Loti wrote a semi-autobiographical novel, *Madame Chrysanthème*, about a Breton ship's officer who travels to Nagasaki and 'weds' an oriental singing girl through the offices of a local marriage broker. Puccini may or may not have read Loti's novel, but he definitely was aware of André Messager's musical setting, a comédie-lyrique that was staged at the Théâtre Lyrique in Paris in 1893.

*Madama Butterfly* is dramaturgically superior in every way to both Long's story and, especially, Belasco's drama. And even by his own high standards, Puccini's is unstintingly generous in matters of flowing melody, harmony and orchestral texture. There is more control than usual in the use of motifs, which are never pedantically attached to mere externals, but serve always to express meaning. As part of his authenticity drive, he immersed himself in the popular and religious music of Japan and went so far as to learn the actual timbre of the Japanese female voice from the actress Sada Jacco, who was touring Europe at the time. Consequently the score includes a number of authentic Japanese melodies and, together with the occasional use of the pentatonic scale and exotic instrumental colouring, they blend perfectly with Puccini's usual melodic facility and mastery of harmony and orchestral texture, to make this the Italian opera par excellence, a work whose lyricism represents its composer at his impressive best.

*John Allen 2008*

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## PUCCINI ON THE LYRIC STAGE

**G**iacomo Puccini, who was born in Lucca 150 years ago, on 22 December 1858, was arguably the last great Italian opera composer. As a member of a long established family of church musicians, it was assumed that young Giacomo would follow in their footsteps, but after some youthful gestures in that direction, he turned his attention to the more lucrative world of opera.

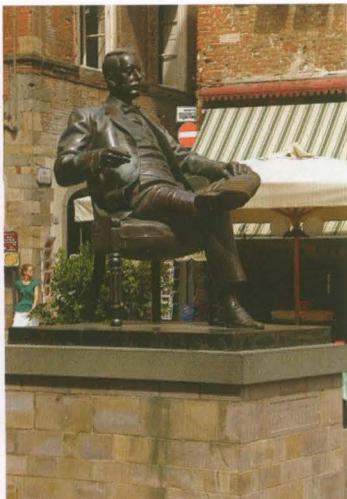
His first stage work, *Le villi*, was written as an entry for one of those short opera competitions that were popular in Italy in the 1880s. Sadly, it didn't do very well in the competition, but a group of his friends financed a production at Milan's Teatro Dal Verme in May 1884. The work, at that time a one-act opera-ballet, was well received, not least by music publisher Giulio Ricordi. Ricordi offered to publish the opera if the composer agreed to expand it into two acts. He did just that, and the new version was staged at Teatro Regio in Turin later the same year. Of course, Puccini being Puccini, he continued to tweak the score, and further adaptations appeared in 1888 and 1892.

*Edgar*, which followed at La Scala in 1889, was a notorious failure, largely because of its libretto; yet it contains some impressive musical ideas and certainly shows the composer's dramatic growth.

In 1893, Puccini struck gold with his third opera, *Manon Lescaut*, which had its premiere in Turin in February 1893, was the work that gave Puccini his first major success. It was the fourth operatic setting of the Abbé Prévost's novel, coming after earlier version by Balfe, Auber and Massenet, and *Manon* was the first of a succession of operatic heroines who are generally referred to as Puccini's 'little women'.

*La Bohème*, which followed at the same venue three years later, saw Puccini achieve full maturity. Based on Henri Murger's *Scènes de la vie de Bohème*, the characters in *La Bohème* are far removed from the rich and titled people found in the operas of earlier Italian composers like Donizetti and Verdi. Their concerns are those of ordinary down-to-earth folk: the everyday problems, the little joys and not-so-little sorrows of life in the Latin Quarter of Paris in the early 1830s.

*Tosca* (1900), based on Sardou's morbid thriller, has a darker intensity of feeling and a more powerful dramatic flow. The characters are more strongly, even violently, depicted, and dense use of Leitmotiv in a widened and tenser harmonic idiom provides the method for Puccini's clash of lurid personality and situation.



Bronze statue of Puccini in his birthplace, Lucca



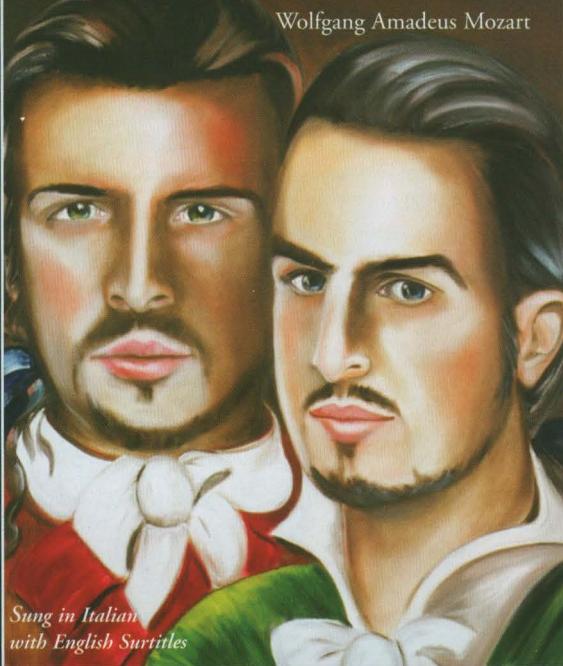
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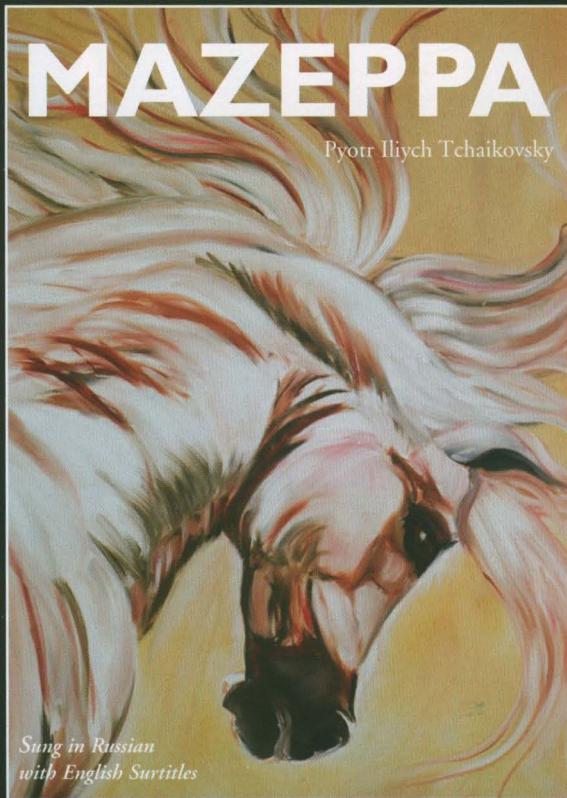


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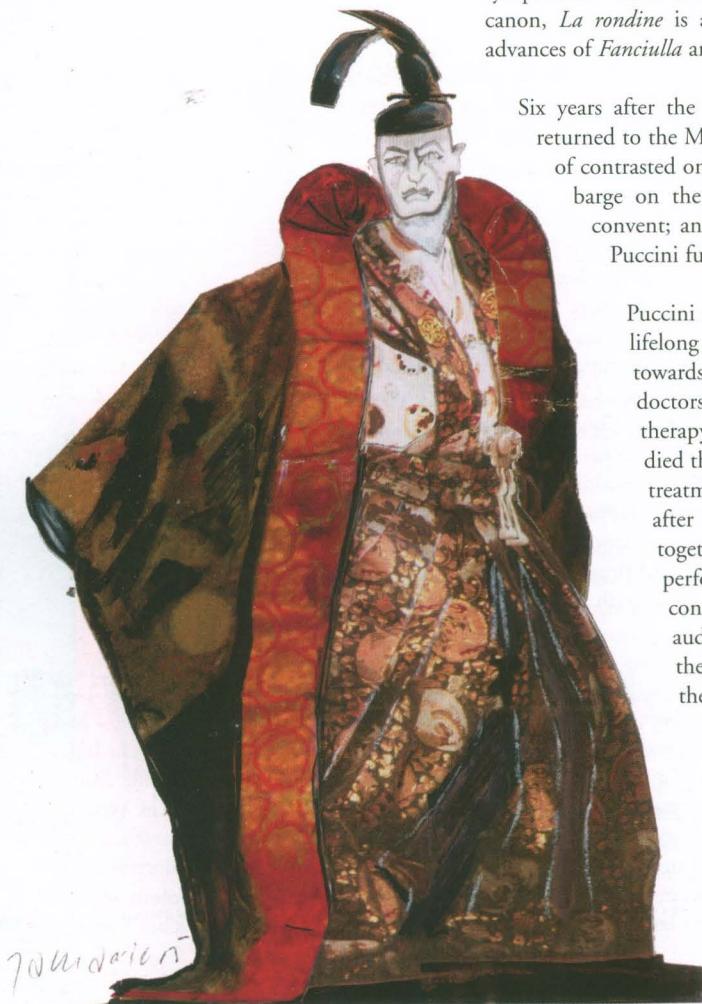
*'Here ends the opera left incomplete by the Master; for at this point, the Master died.' The audience then left the theatre in respectful silence.*

*Madama Butterfly* (1904), whose genesis is covered in a separate article, was followed in 1910 by another David Belasco adaptation, *La fanciulla del West*. This wild west opera had its premiere at the Metropolitan in New York and featured Emmy Destinn, Enrico Caruso and Pasquale Amatio in the leading roles and Arturo Toscanini as conductor.

In 1912, Puccini was commissioned to write a Viennese-style operetta. But the project floundered with the advent of the Great War. The work eventually emerged as an Italian opera called *La rondine* (*The Swallow*) and had its premiere at Monte Carlo in 1917. The opera is set in Paris at the time of the Second Empire and Magda, the 'swallow' of the title, is another of the composer's sympathetic "little women". Although somewhat overlooked in the Puccini canon, *La rondine* is an enchanting work that capitalizes on the harmonic advances of *Fanciulla* and often foreshadows the musical language of *Turandot*.

Six years after the successful mounting of *La fanciulla del West*, Puccini returned to the Metropolitan in December 1918 for *Il trittico*, a triple-bill of contrasted one-act operas: *Il tabarro*, a lurid thriller set aboard a river barge on the Seine; *Suor Angelica*, a sentimental tragedy set in a convent; and *Gianni Schicchi*, an hilarious black-comedy in which Puccini fully indulges his flair for lyrical humour.

Puccini didn't live to complete his final stage work, *Turandot*. A lifelong smoker, he began to complain of chronic sore throats towards the end of 1923. A diagnosis of throat cancer led his doctors to recommend a new and experimental radiation therapy treatment, which was being offered in Brussels. Puccini died there on 29 November 1924 from complications from the treatment; uncontrolled bleeding led to a heart attack the day after surgery. Franco Alfano was commissioned to cobble together a finale from Puccini's extant sketches. At the first performance on 25 April 1926, however, Toscanini stopped conducting after the death of the slave-girl Liù, turned to the audience and said: 'Here ends the opera left incomplete by the Master; for at this point, the Master died.' The audience then left the theatre in respectful silence.



## MADAMA BUTTERFLY BIOGRAPHIES

### ROBERTO COVATTA TENOR (ITALY) *Goro*



Turin-born Roberto Covatta has previously sung Flavio in *Norma*, Spoletta in *Tosca* and both Basilio and Curzio in *Figaro* with Opera Ireland. He studied with soprano Rosetta Noli and made his debut as Dr Cajus in Dieter Kaegi's staging of *Falstaff* at Montepulciano in 2002. Following other supporting roles in Amsterdam and Venice, he sang Rinuccio in *Gianni Schicchi* (Genoa and Munich, 2003), Rodolfo in *La Bohème* (Cesena, 2003), Alfredo in *La traviata* (Catanzaro, 2003; Bolzano, 2005), Filipeto in *I quattro rusteghi* (Ravenna, Pisa, Lucca, Livorno, 2006), Gabriele Adorno in *Simon Boccanegra* (Amsterdam, 2006). His repertoire includes *L'elisir d'amore* (Nemorino), Bastian und Bastiana (Bastiano), *La finta semplice* (Don Polidoro), *Don Giovanni* (Ottavio), *La clemenza di Tito* (Tito), *Così fan tutte* (Ferrando), Rimski-Korsakov's *Mozart and Salieri* (Mozart), Dallapiccola's *Volo di notte* (Pellerin), Handel's *Rodelinda* (Grimoaldo) and Guglielmi's *Le vicende d'amore* (Don Alfonso). He recently sang his first Don Ramiro in *La Cenerentola* with Orchestra Luigi Cherubini (Musica Riva Festival, 2007).

### BRENDAN COLLINS BARITONE (IRELAND) *Prince Yamadori*



An Opera Ireland regular, Brendan studied at the Cork School of Music and at the DIT Conservatory. In 2007 he was granted a scholarship to study at the opera studio of the Theatre de la Monnaie in Brussels under José van Dam. In 2005 he was one of only twelve Irish singers to be chosen for the first Wexford Festival Artists Development programme under Dennis O'Neill. He has performed in Ireland, mainland Europe and America with Opera Ireland, Lyric Opera, Opera Theatre Company, Opera 2005, Opera Cork, Anna Livia Opera Festival, Opera South and Co-Opera. His roles include Schaunard, Count Almaviva (*Figaro*), Fiorello (*The Barber of Seville*), Ceprano (*Rigoletto*), Amantio di Nicalao (*Gianni Schicchi*), Baron Duphol & Dr Grenvil (*La traviata*), Dancaire (*Carmen*). Highlights on the concert platform include *Messiah* (Pro Cathedral Dublin), Mozart's *Requiem*, Orff's *Carmina Burana* (NCH), Mozart's *Vespers* (Kajetanekirche, Salzburg) and Coronation Mass (Vienna), Haydn's *Nelson Mass* (Cork) and Beethoven 9th Symphony (Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels). Future engagements include Masetto with the Orchestra of St Cecilia and Marcello with the Glasthule Opera Festival.

### MARY FLAHERTY SOPRANO (IRELAND) *Kate Pinkerton*



Roles to date this year for Mary have included Fiordiligi in Mozart's *Così fan tutte* and Musetta in Puccini's *La Bohème*, both for Opera in the Open in August. Previously with Opera Ireland she has performed in *The Magic Flute*, *La traviata*, and *Faust*. Other operatic appearances include *Suor Angelica*, *Cavalleria rusticana*, *Rigoletto*, *Aida*, *Madama Butterfly* and the Irish premier of Verdi's *Attila* all with Lyric Opera, with roles including Frasquita in *Carmen* and Flora in *La traviata*, also with Lyric Opera. She debuted in the title role of Puccini's *Tosca* with Co-Opera productions in 2006. Mary performs regularly in concerts throughout Ireland and appeared as a soloist in St Patricks Cathedral in New York last October. She continues her studies with her teacher Conor Farren.



### **YUNAH LEE SOPRANO (KOREA) *Cio-Cio San***

Yunah Lee, was born in Taegu, Korea. She made her European Opera debut in the title role of *Madama Butterfly* with Bern State Opera, Switzerland, followed by a concert with Gran Teatre del Liceu, Barcelona. With New York City Opera, she has sung Micaela in *Carmen*, Antonia in *Les contes d'Hoffmann*, Gretel and the Dew Fairy in *Hänsel und Gretel*, Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*, Mimi in *La Bohème* and this past season another *Madama Butterfly*. She made her debut with the Sao Paulo Opera in Brazil as Micaela. Other engagements include, Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* with Palm Beach Opera, Liù in *Turandot* with Minnesota Opera and Orlando Opera, Leila in Bizet's *Les pêcheurs de perles* and Mimi with Cleveland Opera, Nedda in *Pagliacci* with Intermountain Opera, Gounod's *Marguerite* with Toledo Opera, El Paso Opera, Minnesota Opera and the Kalamazoo Symphony and Juliette in Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette* with Opera Roanoke. Ms Lee made her debut at Carnegie Hall in New York City in a solo recital.



### **ERIC MARTIN-BONNET BASS (FRANCE) *The Bonze***

After graduating from the Paris Conservatoire, Eric Martin-Bonnet's debut as Urbain in *La vie Parisienne* at the Opéra-Comique was soon followed by appearances in other major French opera houses, where his roles included major bass roles in the operas of Mozart and Verdi as well as in *La damnation de Faust*, *Fidelio*, *Vanessa*, *Lulu*, *Der Prozess*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Peter Grimes*, *La sonnambula*, *Louise*, *Tosca*, *Hoffmann*, *Roméo et Juliette*, Minos' *Les Rois* and Rameau's *Zoroastre* (European tour with Les Arts Florissants and Erato CD). His international engagements have taken him to Bonn, Eindhoven, Seville, Liege, Palermo and Berlin's Deutsche Oper where he has appeared in *Damnation de Faust*, *Roméo et Juliette*, *Le Cid*, *Hérodiade*, *Don Giovanni*, *Pelléas et Mélisande*, *Faust* and Beethoven's *Leonore* as well as in the *Requiems* of Duruflé and Verdi. Future engagements include Reyer's *Salammbo* in Marseille, *Hoffmann* in Avignon, *Tannhäuser* in Bordeaux, *Der fliegende Holländer* in Saint-Etienne, *Falstaff* in Toulon, *Fortunio* at Paris Opera-Comique, *Damnation de Faust* in Rennes and Nantes, *Les Rois* in Bordeaux.



### **KEITH OLSEN TENOR (US) *Pinkerton***

Keith Olsen, who sang Pollione in Opera Ireland's *Norma* in 2003, appears regularly in the world's most prestigious opera venues. These include London's Royal Opera House (*Kátya Kabanová*, *Tosca*, *Aida*, *Butterfly*, *Bohème*); Opera Bastille, Paris (*Tosca*, *Simon Boccanegra*, *Butterfly*, *Bohème*); La Scala, Milan (*Fedora*, *Vita* - World première), (*Fanciulla del West* tour to Japan); Staatsoper Wien (*Tosca*); Staatsoper Berlin (*Trovatore*, *L'Africaine*, *Aida*); Arena di Verona (*Aida*, *Carmen*, *Butterfly*, *Bohème*). His recordings include Verdi's *Requiem* and Handel's *Rodrigo* for EMI and *La damnation de Faust* for Bayer. Soon to be released on DVD is his *Aida* on the MAWA label. Mr. Olsen's eight years of formal education have earned him numerous recognitions, including the prestigious Grace Moore Graduate Fellowship in Voice/Opera (University of Tennessee, Knoxville; Master of Music), scholarship recipient during his four years at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music (Bachelor of Music). At the Juilliard School of Music, New York City, he culminated his studies with two years in the Professional Studies Programme.



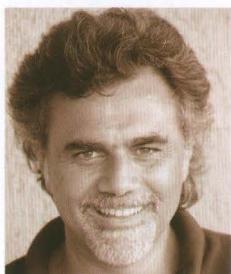
### **MARCEL VANAUD BARITONE (BELGIUM) Sharpless**

Marcel Vanaud, who sang the title role in Balfe's *Falstaff* for Opera Ireland in September, has also sung Amonasro, Rigoletto, Gérard, Scarpia and Don Pasquale with the company. After studying at Brussels Conservatoire and in Liège, he spent seven years with Opéra de Wallonie before beginning his international career at La Monnaie in Brussels in the three Mozart/DaPonte operas. A regular guest at opera houses all over Europe and in North and South America, his repertoire includes Verdi's Nabucco, Ezio (*Attila*), Francesco (*Masnadieri*), Stankar (*Stiffelio*), Miller, Luna, Germont, Boccanegra, Renato, Carlo (*Forza del destino*), Rodrigue, Iago and Ford as well as other Italian baritone parts, the main French bariton *Martin* roles, and Wagner's Dutchman. In 1998 he made his La Scala debut in the premiere of Giacomo Manzoni's *Dr Faustus*, and he has also appeared in Hindemiths *Cardillac*, Gottfried von Einern's *Dantons Tod* and Igor Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex*. In 1998 he sang Vitellius in EMI's recording of Massenet's *Hérodiade* under Michel Plasson; and he has also recorded a CD recital of Verdi baritone arias.



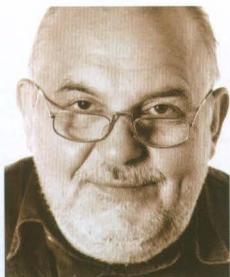
### **QIU LIN ZHANG CONTRALTO (CHINA) Suzuki**

Qiu Lin Zhang began her career with l'Opéra national de Toulouse singing Suzuki, Mere Jeanne (*Dialogues de Carmélites*), Neris (*Medea*), Third Lady (*Magic Flute*), Voice from Above (*Die Frau ohne Shatten*), the Mother (*Hoffmann*), Thebaine (*Oedipe*), Erda and First Norne in Nicolas Joel's staging of Wagner's *Ring*. She Sang Carmen in Hong Kong, Maddalena (*Rigoletto*) in Rennes Opera House, Mozart's Sextus in Saint-Etienne, Suzuki in Marseille Opera House. She sang Erda, First Norn, Rossweisse in Bob Wilson's *Ring* in Paris Théâtre du Châtelet under Eschenbach and at the Royal Opera of Amsterdam as well as in Lisbon's São Carlo, the Royal Albert Hall for the 2006 BBC Proms' festival. In concert she has sung *Das Lied von den Erde*, and Wagners' *Wesendonk lieder* with l'Orchestre National de France, conducted by Eschenbach, *Das Knaben Wunderhorn* with Orchestre de Rouen, *Kindentötenlieder* with Orchestre de Toulouse and Brahms' *Alto Rhapsody* with Orchestre National de Lille. Further engagements include the Mother (*Hoffmann*), in Avignon, Erda and the first Norn at the Paris Bastille in 2010.



### **BRUNO DAL BON (ITALY) CONDUCTOR**

Bruno Dal Bon has previously conducted *La traviata* and *Turandot* for Opera Ireland. After graduating from Milan Conservatory and further studies with Franco Ferrara and Sergiu Celibidache, he became assistant to Carlo Maria Giulini. Currently, he is President and Artistic Director of As.Li.Co. and Teatro Sociale di Como. He has conducted *Rita*, *Il campanello*, *La gazzetta*, *Don Procopio*, *Madama Butterfly* and *Il trovatore* in Como, Pavia and Novara, *La Bohème* at the Sala Verdi of Milan, and *Rigoletto* in Treviso. In 1997, Dal Bon began his collaboration with the Kansai Opera of Osaka where he conducted *Madama Butterfly*, *Il trovatore*, *Falstaff*, *Tosca*, *Un ballo in maschera*, and *Adriana Lecouvreur*. During the 2002-2003 season he conducted *Lelisir d'amore* in Graz and *Il trovatore* in Saint-Etienne. He has most recently conducted *Turandot* in Osaka, Puccini's *Il trittico* in Graz and Falla's *El retablo de Maese Pedro* and *El amor brujo* in Como. He has conducted *La Bohème* and *Otello* in Osaka, *Pagliacci* in Tokyo and Puccini's *Le Villi* in Como and Shanghai as well as several concerts in Beijing and Istanbul.



### EIKE GRAMSS (GERMANY) DIRECTOR

Eike Gramss was born in Bremen, Germany. He studied at the university for music and theatre in Hamburg. He directed numerous plays by Aristophanis, Shakespeare and Botho Strauss. From 1985 to 2001 he was general manager of the theatres in Krefeld and Moenchengladbach and from 2001 to 2007 he was Director of the Municipal Theatre in Bern, Switzerland. He has staged operas at home and abroad at the Megaron Mousikis in Athens, the state operas in Hanover and Karlsruhe, the state opera in Berlin, Opera Leipzig, English National Opera in London, the Semperoper Dresden, the Bavarian State Opera Munich, Teatro Verdi di Trieste, Teatro del Maggio Musicals Firenze. Since 2007 he has been Professor at the Mozarteum in Salzburg Opera. Future engagements will take him to Montpellier, Athens, Florenz and Antwerp. He has worked with conductors Christian of Perrick, Hans Drewanz, Nicolas Tsouchlos, Fabio Luisi, Paul Daniel, Miguel Gomez Martinez, Reinhard Seifried, Jiri Kout, Ottavio Dantone, Myun Whun Chung, Zubin Mehta.



### CHRISTOPH WAGENKNECHT (GERMANY) SET DESIGNER

Christoph Wagenknecht was born in 1944 in Berlin and grew up in Bremen. After leaving school he worked as an assistant in the studios of a number of Set Designers including Wilfried Kinks and Karl-Ernst Herrman from whom he learned his craft. He has worked with Eike Gramss for over 40 years beginning with the plays of Synge, O'Casey and Brendan Behan. He has designed many opera productions in France and Italy including *Kullervo* by Sallinen with Dieter Kaegi as director and Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* at the Maggio Musicale in Florence. For the past 17 years Christoph Wagenknecht has worked in the Stadttheater Bern.



### CATHERINE VOEFFRAY (SWITZERLAND) COSTUME DESIGNER

Catherine Voeffray finished her training in fashion design in Zürich in 1989 and since then has worked as a freelance costume assistant and costume designer, apart from a spell as deputy head of the costume section at Stadttheater Bern. She created the costumes for Eike Gramss' staging of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* at Maggio Musicale Fiorentino 2002 and for his *Madama Butterfly* at Teatro Del Giglio in Lucca. She has also design the costumes for ballets choreographed by Martin Schläpfer at Staatstheater Mainz. Her regular cooperation with the choreographer Stijn Celis included productions at Hessisches Staatstheater Wiesbaden, at Les Grands Ballets Canadiens' in Montréal, at Cullberg Balletten, as well as at Stadttheater Bern, where between 2003-2007 she was responsible for the costumes of numerous productions (amongst others: *Aschenputtel*, *Le sacre du printemps*, *Petruschka*, *Swan Lake* and *Liaisons Dangereuses*). She recently designed costumes for the *Le Sacre du Printemps* at Cederlake Contemporary Ballet New York, *Skulls and Bees* for Nederlands Danstheater and *Sonata* at CullbergBalletten in Stockholm in May 2008.



### **ALICE COGHLAN (UK) ASSISTANT DIRECTOR**

Alice holds a Directing MA from Middlesex University and graduated with First Class Honours in Drama & English from Trinity College, Dublin and UC Berkeley. She is delighted to be returning to Opera Ireland for her third season, where she has previously assistant directed on *Così fan tutte* and The Mozart Da Ponte Cycle and was a Director's Assistant on *Imeneo* and *La Cenerentola*. She has also staff/assistant directed for Scottish Opera, Bourgas Opera Bulgaria, Opera Academia Europea Florence, California Shakespeare Festival and The Abbey Theatre, and has been an assistant director/observer at The Royal Opera House and Opera North. In 2003 Alice founded Wonderland Productions. Writing/directing credits with Wonderland include *The Spook Show* and *Life Shop till you Drop!* (currently touring Ireland), translating and directing Pagliacci and Molière's *The Miser*, and directing *The Seagull*, *The Christmas Cabaret* and *L'Amour Medicin*. In 2007 she was a participant on *The Next Stage* - Dublin Theatre Festival's Emerging Artists programme. For more about Wonderland see [www.wonderlandtheatre.com](http://www.wonderlandtheatre.com)



### **BRIGITTE MUNET (FRANCE) CHORUS DIRECTOR**

Brigitte Munet has previously directed the Opera Ireland Chorus in *Turandot*, *Dead Man Walking* and *Le nozze di Figaro*. She holds a Master One in Musicology and has won many awards for harmony, counterpoint and piano playing, which she studied with Denise Duport in Geneva. She studied choir conducting with Michel Corboz at the Conservatoire of Geneva and developed her skills at the choir school of the Opera Lyon, New College Choir Oxford as well as with Edouard Higginbottom and Jörg Straube in Hannover. She studied conducting with Lutz Köhler at Musikhochschule Hannover and with Maestro Marek Janowski and the Monte-Carlo Philharmonic Orchestra, as well as with Maestro Claudio Abbado, the Lucerne Festival Orchestra, the Gustav Mahler Jugendorchester and the Mahler Chamber Orchestra. Brigitte Munet was Heinz Hennig's former assistant for the Knabenchor Hannover. She has acted as choir master in different choir schools: Dôle, Grasse and Saint-Raphaël. She was also choir master at the Conservatoire National de Région de Nice and the Académie de Musique de Monaco.



### **MAIRÉAD HURLEY (IRELAND) REPETITEUR**

Mairead Hurley studied at the RIAM in Dublin as well as at UCD and at the National Opera Studio in London. Currently working as repetiteur at the DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama, she has performed extensively throughout Ireland and the UK as recitalist, accompanist and repetiteur. For Opera Ireland Mairead Hurley has worked on *La Bohème*, *Macbeth*, *The Gypsy Baron*, *The Merry Widow*, *Les contes d'Hoffmann*, *Die Fledermaus*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *Aida*, *Der fliegende Holländer*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Don Carlo*, *Carmen*, *Andrea Chénier*, *Rigoletto*, *Die Zauberflöte*, *Faust*, *Don Pasquale*, *Le nozze di Figaro* and two different productions of *La traviata*. She has also worked with OTC, ONI, Wexford Festival and the RTÉ Proms. Productions for ONI include *Idomeneo*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *The Magic Flute*, *Fidelio* and *Don Giovanni*. She has been the accompanist for all of Opera Ireland's Masterclasses in Limerick, and also for Gerhard Markson's International Conducting Course. In May of this year Mairead was appointed to the staff of the Royal Irish Academy of Music where she now works as a repetiteur.

# A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM



Benjamin Britten

Strata<sup>3</sup>

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*presents*

# A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

## Benjamin Britten

#### IRISH PREMIÈRE – NEW PRODUCTION

*Sung in English with Surtitles*

Libretto adapted from Shakespeare

by Benjamin Britten

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DIRECTOR David Bolger

SET & COSTUME DESIGNER Monica Frawley

## LIGHTING DESIGNER

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR      Emma O'Kane

## RTÉ Concert Orchestra

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Chorus Director Brigitte Munet

Repetiteur Aoife O'Sullivan

Gaiety Theatre, Dublin

Gaiety Theatre, Dublin  
16-18 & 21 November 2008

*There will be a 20 minute interval after Act 2*

CAST

OBERON	Flavio Oliver
TYTANIA	Louise Walsh
PUCK	Horace Oliver
THESEUS	Philip O'Reilly
HIPPOLYTA	Imelda Drumm
LYSANDER	Mark Milhofer
DEMETRIUS	Nyle Wolfe
HERMIA	Fiona Murphy
HELENA	Sandra Oman
BOTTOM	Gerard O'Connor
QUINCE	Jean Teitgen
FLUTE	Richard Coxon
SNUG	John Molloy
SNOUT	Eugene Ginty
STARVELING	Martin Higgins
COBWEB	Kevin Bates
PEASEBLOSSOM	Aidan Fitzpatrick
MUSTARDSEED	Ben Middleton
MOTH	Joshua Brown

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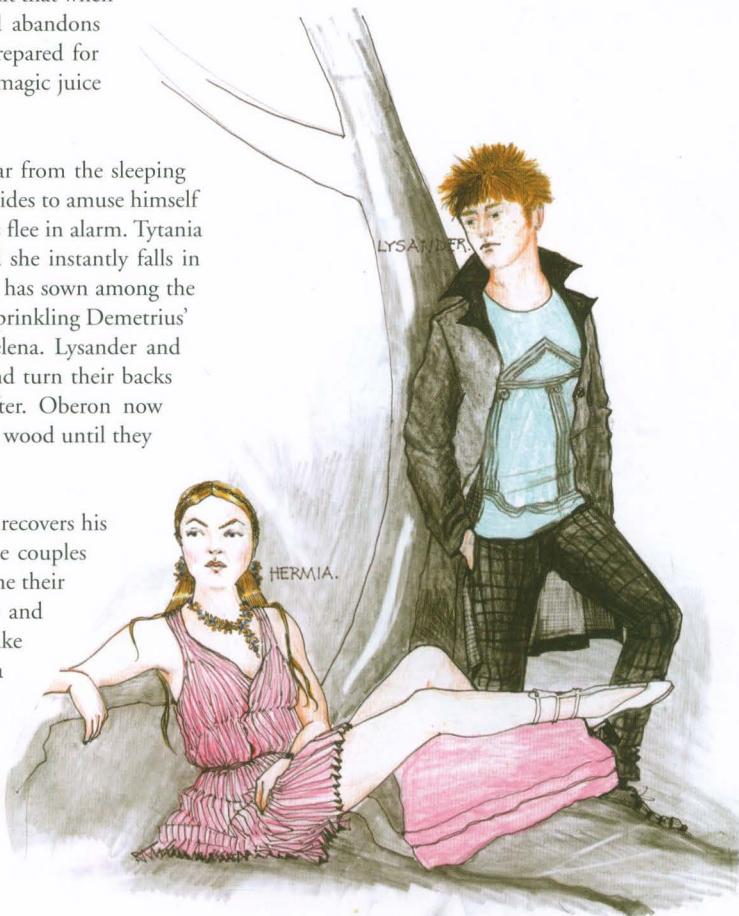
# BRITTON: A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

## THE PLOT AT A GLANCE

Act I takes place in a wood near Athens at twilight. Oberon and Tytania, the King and Queen of the fairies, are arguing about the ownership of a young Indian boy. To punish his wife, Oberon orders his henchman Puck to sprinkle her eyelids with a magic juice that will make her fall passionately in love with the first creature she sees. A group of six rustic artisans – Shakespeare's rude mechanicals – gathers to rehearse a play that they have written themselves and which they intend to perform as a wedding gift for Duke Theseus. The four young lovers arrive. In order to avoid marrying Demetrius, Hermia has fled from Athens with Lysander. Demetrius, who is on her trail, is in turn followed by Helena, who is in love with him. Oberon orders Puck to sprinkle Demetrius' eyelids with the juice, to make him love Helena. But Puck sprinkles the juice into the eyes of the wrong man, with the result that when Lysander sees Helena, he falls in love with her and abandons Hermia. Tytania, meanwhile falls asleep on a bed prepared for her by the fairies, and Oberon himself sprinkles the magic juice on her eyelids.

Act II takes place in the same wood at night. Not far from the sleeping Tytania, the rustics are rehearsing their play. Puck decides to amuse himself by turning the weaver Bottom into an ass. The others flee in alarm. Tytania awakes, her gaze falls on the ass-headed weaver, and she instantly falls in love with him. Oberon discovers the confusion Puck has sown among the young Athenians. He intervenes to put things right, sprinkling Demetrius' eyes with the juice so that he falls in love with Helena. Lysander and Demetrius quarrel over the once-spurned Helena, and turn their backs on Hermia, whom they both formerly yearned after. Oberon now commands Puck to chase the four lovers through the wood until they are exhausted.

Act III: Oberon frees Tytania from the spell. Bottom recovers his human shape and is found by his fellow rustics. The couples think the events of the night were a dream, and resume their proper pairings – Lysander and Hermia, Demetrius and Helena. The scene changes to the palace of Duke Theseus in Athens, where his wedding to Hippolyta takes place. The Duke gives his permission for the weddings of the four young lovers. The rustics are permitted to perform their play *Pyramus and Thisby*, after which the three newly married couples retire to bed. Oberon and Tytania, now reconciled, arrive with their fairies to bless the sleeping household.



# PERCHANCE, TO DREAM OF FAIRIES

Dreams loom large in the works of William Shakespeare. Hamlet, we recall, fears that falling asleep might cause him 'perchance to dream'. The Duke of Clarence in *Richard III* has 'ghastly dreams', Iago invents one to inflame Othello's jealousy, and wise old Prospero reminds us that 'dreams are such stuff as we are made on.'

Elsewhere in *The Tempest*, Prospero asks for 'some heavenly music' to work his end upon the senses of his dramatic characters and his audiences. In his operatic version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Benjamin Britten provides precisely that, with Shakespeare's magical comedy affording him themes well within his comfort zone – night, sleep and dreams – themes with which he could happily empathise.

The *New Grove Dictionary of Opera* lists 29 settings of Shakespeare's 1596 comedy, starting with Henry Purcell's *The Fairy Queen* in 1692 and including versions by Henry Bishop (1815) and Franz von Suppé (1844). Britten's version, He composed in only seven months to celebrate the 1960 reconstruction of the Jubilee Hall in Aldeburgh comes in at number 22. He conducted the first performance there on 11 June that year and revised the work slightly for its Covent Garden premiere under Georg Solti the following February.



In order to reduce the play to a practical operatic length, the composer and his partner Peter Pears omitted about half the lines and re-ordered many of those remaining. But Shakespeare's words remain intact. And although some of the play's scenes are transposed, the opera tightens the action considerably and faithfully presents the entangled stories of the three groups of characters involved.

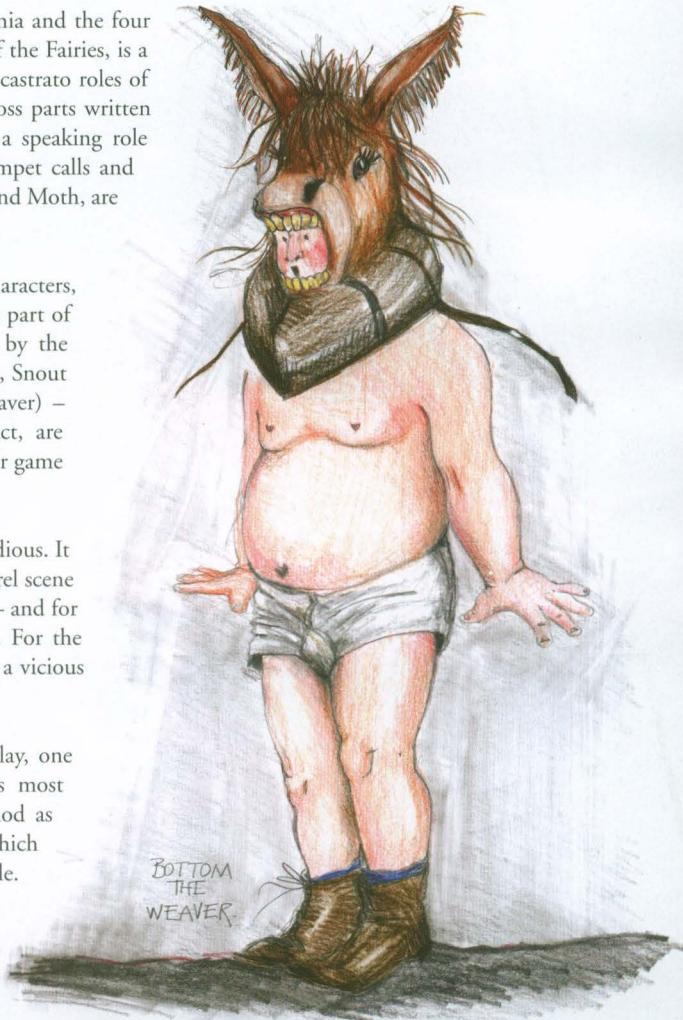
Each of these groups – fairies, lovers and rustics – has its own sound-world, created by distinctive instrumental colouring. The fairies are represented by mysterious string glissandi, abetted by ethereal harp and celesta sounds, and harmonies that are almost supernatural. The four young lovers are given warmer and more moving music on strings and woodwind. The rustics have lumbering rhythms that make much use of bassoons and deep brass, including a wonderful trombone glide as Bottom rehearses his lion's roar. Even the forest has its individual timbre; note the deep groans of the strings and the shimmering harps that bring alive the sounds of rustling leaves and creaking branches

The opera contains several casting innovations. The fairy queen Tytania and the four young lovers are sung by normal lyric voices, but Oberon, the King of the Fairies, is a countertenor. Nowadays we are used to hearing countertenors in the castrato roles of Handel and other baroque composers, but you don't often come across parts written specifically for the voice. His henchman, the mischievous Puck, is a speaking role played by an actor or dancer to the musical accompaniment of trumpet calls and drums. The other fairies, led by Cobweb, Peaseblossom, Mustardseed and Moth, are depicted by boys' unbroken voices

Towards the end of Act I, we meet the rustics, a group of comical characters, tradesmen from Athens who have come together to perform a play as part of the entertainment at the marriage of Theseus and Hippolyta. Led by the carpenter/director Quince, their very names – Flute (a bellows maker), Snout (a tinker), Snug (a joiner), Starveling (a tailor), and Bottom (a weaver) – denote their lesser status as "mechanical" tradesmen. These, in fact, are Shakespeare's rude mechanicals, lowly beings who are deemed to be fair game for the gentle indignities of which they are mainly unaware.

Britten's score for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is one of his most melodious. It is particularly so in the music he wrote for the four lovers – their quarrel scene calls forth some of the composer's most truly "operatic" vocal scoring – and for the love scene between Tytania and the donkey-headed Bottom. For the rustics' performance of the play *Pyramus and Thisbe*, Britten provides a vicious take-off of traditional Italian *opera buffa*.

The score of this ingenious and subtle evocation of Shakespeare's play, one permeated by the magic of the forest, contains some of Britten's most translucent and magical music. Although he never used serial method as such, the series of major triads, connected by glissandi on the strings, which so vividly depict the wood, covers all twelve notes of the chromatic scale. The journey from that ethereal forest opening to the radiant closing fairy chorus is one of musical magic, magic that worthily matches that the poetry that inspired the whole exercise.



John Allen 2008



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Benjamin Britten  
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*"Peter Grimes" established the 32-year-old Britten as an opera composer of the first rank and its theme, that of an outsider fighting the establishment, was one that would recur throughout his subsequent career.*

## THE OPERAS OF BENJAMIN BRITTEN

The sensational premiere of Benjamin Britten's *Peter Grimes* at Sadler's Wells Theatre in London in 1945 was a turning point in British musical history, and a launching pad for all that was to follow. It is true that Britten had composed an operetta, *Paul Bunyon*, while living in America during the early years of World War II, but *Grimes* was the real beginning. It established the 32-year-old Britten as an opera composer of the first rank and its theme, that of an outsider fighting the establishment, was one that would recur throughout his subsequent career. *Peter Grimes* also consolidated the position of the composer's partner Peter Pears, the tenor who was to have roles in every one of Britten's operas.

For various reasons, both personal and economic, Britten now decided to concentrate on chamber opera, and he formed the English Opera Group for the presentation of such works. *The Rape of Lucretia*, which has its first outing at Glyndebourne in the summer of 1946, shows his mastery of limited means to expressive ends, especially in his handling of the orchestra. From this tragedy, he turned to a short story by Guy de Maupassant, with the comic action re-located to Suffolk, for *Albert Herring*. There is again a brilliant use of the small orchestra to point up and lend some depth to the work.

During the next two years, Britten adapted two important historical English operas. A clever reconstruction of John Gay's 1728 success *The Beggar's Opera* was followed by a free realisation of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*. In between these two pieces, he proved his versatility with a delightful children's work, *The Little Sweep*.

In 1951, the composer returned to full scale opera with the all-male *Billy Budd*, based on Herman Melville's novel inspired by a mutiny aboard a British man-of-war at Spithead in 1797. Britten's setting of Herman's book is a powerful study of goodness versus evil in an adroitly realised setting of nautical life aboard *HMS Indomitable*.

*Gloriana* which followed in 1953, was also large in scale. Written for the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, it aroused considerable hostility at its Covent Garden premiere. The essentially non-musical first night audience was expecting a sort of latter day *Merrie England* and was quite put out by the work's searching look at the private life of the first Queen Elizabeth.

Returning to chamber opera in 1954, Britten produced *The Turn of the Screw*, a work whose taut thematic integration is a reflection of Henry James' intense, painful story of two children possessed by ghosts. By contrast, *Noyes Fludde*

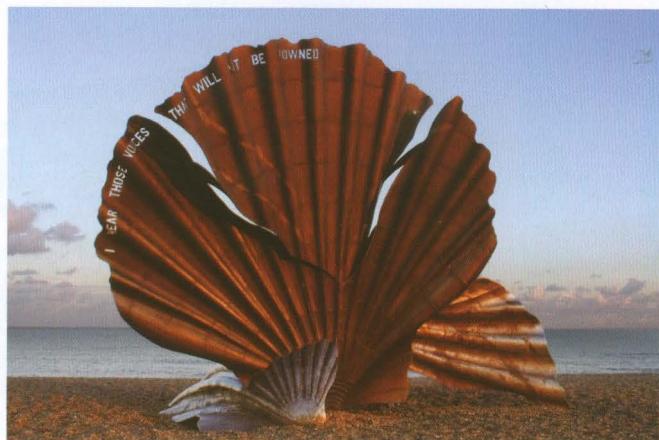
represents Britten's freshest and most delightful vein, a church miracle play that uses a mixture of children and professional performers with adroit skill and understanding.

Britten's 1960 setting of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which is discussed in detail elsewhere in the programme, was written with both chamber and full-scale productions in mind. The works that followed were very definitely intended for staging on a more intimate scale. Combining some of the techniques he had used in *Noyes Fludde* with his new-found experience of Japanese Noh plays, he created the three Church Parables: *Curlew River*, *The Burning Fiery Furnace*, and *The Prodigal Son*. Designed to be performed in church, and taking some of their ritual nature and their dramatic and instrumental techniques from Noh, they are nevertheless individual works that absorb the Japanese influence into a form that is at least as strongly rooted in early English religious music drama.

In 1971, the BBC commissioned Britten to write a TV opera. The theme of Henry James' *Owen Wingrave* reflected Britten's own pacifism, and though dramatically it leans more towards a subjective view rather than an objective discussion of the issues involved, the work is expertly written and turns the limitations of TV to advantage in its use of that medium's techniques. Britten's last opera, *Death in Venice*, is based on the novella by Thomas Mann. It tells the harrowing tale of the writer Aschenbach who, while holidaying in Venice, becomes obsessed by a beautiful boy called Tadzio. The outcome of this infatuation is that Aschenbach remains on in Venice in spite of the advent of a cholera epidemic, to which he finally succumbs.

Britten's 1960 setting of Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream" was written with both chamber and full-scale productions in mind. The works that followed were very definitely intended for staging on a more intimate scale.

Magi Hambling's tribute to Benjamin Britten on Aldeburgh beach, Suffolk. The edge of the main shell is pierced with the words "I hear those voices that will not be drowned" taken from Britten's *Peter Grimes*.



*They live in ruined landscapes, their shapes bright and invisible in tumbled houses, in fields full of yellow weed, by a lone bush, in the long view from carved standing stone.*

## FAIRIES, CHANGELINGS, LOST CHILDREN

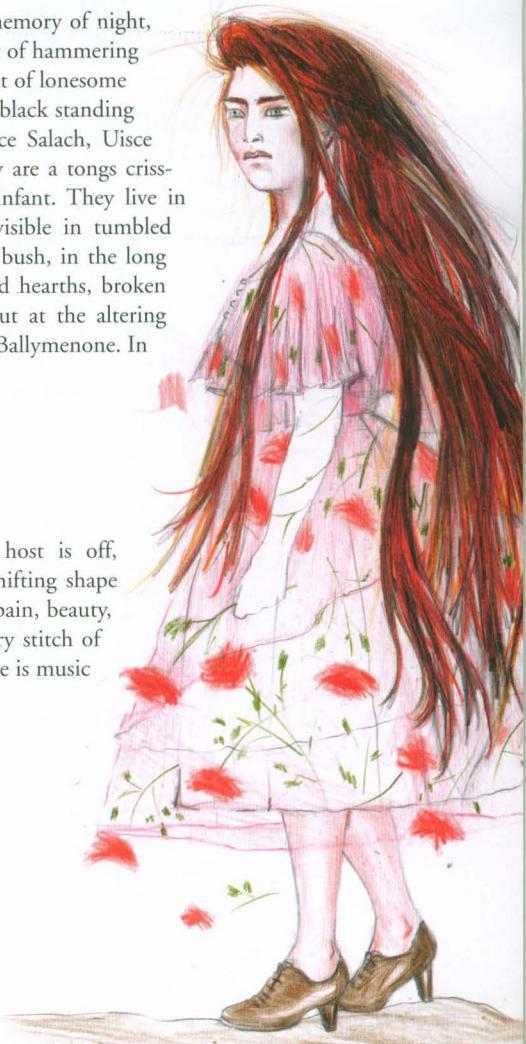
The fairy world of Shakespeare and Britten in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is English; in this production for Opera Ireland that world becomes Irish, art shifting shape as the fairies do. A deserted farmhouse in a forest becomes the forest, generations of lost children inhabit the webbed shadows, Puck is farmer and other. Rath and hill are rooted, alive.

The Sí. The Good People. Na huaisle. Dream na gcnoc. An dream aerach.

They come out of time, out of night and the memory of night, out of flicker of fire, out of whitethorn bush, out of hammering of iron on iron, out of babbling voices stilled, out of lonesome fiddle tunes. They are a young, vivid woman in black standing on the doorstep calling out 'Uisce Salach, Uisce Salach, Uisce Salach' before she casts the tea leaves out. They are a tongs criss-crossed on the cradle to protect the sleeping infant. They live in ruined landscapes, their shapes bright and invisible in tumbled houses, in fields full of yellow weed, by a lone bush, in the long view from carved standing stone. By abandoned hearths, broken lintels, gaping windows. Looking down and out at the altering views. In the hills of Tarmon, Teelin, Inishkeen, Ballymenone. In memory, story, undefeated imagination:

The Good People, God bless them,  
Our backs to them, Our faces from them,  
And we wish them good luck on their journey

Midsummer-Midwinter, November, May the host is off, moving on the air, unwinged birds in flight, shifting shape across water. Young, ancient, infinite; spirits of pain, beauty, eternal loss; grief and celebration etched in every stitch of nakedness; old children, child ancients, the dance is music and the music is loss.





Tumbled from Heaven, this world and the other on the breath of their fall.

As Henry Glassie has written '*The shape of reality remains at question, so serious investigators adhere to strict rules of evidence and argue earnestly over the facts, while sly people step into the space between terror and amusement to contrive little fictions.*'

In 1920 Mr and Mrs Kelleher in Co. Wicklow tell Lady Gregory. 'We had one of them in the house for a while. He was about fifteen inches tall.

He was wearing a red cap and

a little red cloth skirt. We had a cage here, and I wish I had put him in it. It was a cage we had for a thrush.' In 1972 Peter Flanagan in Co. Fermanagh recalls seeing this wee boy in the corner of a house up on the mountain. 'He had a very thin worn face on him; you'd think that he was a thousand years of age. A very faded-out looking figure.' He could fly anywhere, had been left in the cradle in place of the normal child. One Christmas morning 'he just riz up and cleared away.' In New Zealand in 1990 I hear of Dalton 'the wee man' who came to live on Frank the Rattler's farm in Co. Cavan fifty years earlier. Tom O'Donnell describes 'this wee thing dukin' round the jam of the door, only about three feet high.' He relates how lonesome his uncle was when Dalton disappeared and how the local garda sergeant laughed and made fun of Frank when he reported 'the wee man' missing. 'Is it a dwarf so?'

Puck is in us, is us.

A Midsummer Night's Dream - Shakespeare's play, Britten's opera - has entered that space between terror and amusement, made true fictions that help shape our humanity, that flare star-bright on bog and stage, clinging to sea-rock, flowering through crack and crevice of the soul.

Vincent Woods

Playwright and presenter of  
The Arts Show, RTE Radio 1

PUCK



## A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM BIOGRAPHIES



### RICHARD COXON TENOR (UK) Flute

Richard Coxon has previously sung in Opera Ireland's *Der fliegende Holländer* and *Turandot*. His UK and international engagements have included performances with the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, Florida Grand Opera, Greek National Opera, New Israeli Opera, Theatre Royale de la Monnaie, Opéra de Montréal, Nationale Reisoper, Opera Zuid, English National Opera, Scottish Opera, Opera North, Glyndebourne, Grange Park, Buxton and Spoleto Festivals. His roles include Alfredo and Gastone (*La traviata*), The Painter (*Lulu*), Squeak (*Billy Budd*), Mr By-Ends (*The Pilgrim's Progress*), Fenton (*Falstaff*), Young Convict (*From the House of the Dead*), Nick (*The Handmaid's Tale*), Brighella (*Ariadne auf Naxos*), Italian Tenor (*Der Rosenkavalier*), The Worker (*La vida breve*), Songseller (*Il tabarro*), Jaquino (*Fidelio*), Nemorino (*L'elisir d'amore*), Narraboth (*Salomé*), Roldolfo (*La Bohème*), Bill (*Flight*), Vanya Kudrjash (*Katya Kabanova*), Tom Rakewell (*The Rake's Progress*), Piquillo (*La Périchole*), Edoardo (*Un giorno di regno*), Nick the rar-tender (*La Fanciulla del West*), Lieutenant Bonnet (*War and Peace*) and The Duke of Mantua (*Rigoletto*).



### IMELDA DRUMM MEZZO-SOPRANO (IRELAND) Hippolyta

Laois-born Imelda Drumm, who first sang with Opera Ireland as Thisbe in *La Cenerentola* in 1995, studied with Ann-Marie O'Sullivan and Dr Veronica Dunne. After graduating with an Honours Business Degree from DCU, she continued singing studies at the National Opera Studio London in 1997 supported by Glyndebourne opera. Her roles include Meg Page (*Falstaff*) with Bryn Terfel, Rossini's Rosina, Strauss's Composer, Fox (*Cunning Little Vixen*) with Makerras, Béatrice (*Béatrice et Bénédict*), Orphée (*Orphée et Euridice*), Carmen with Makerras, Hänsel (*Hänsel und Gretel* – Olivier Prize Winning Production for Welsh National Opera), Annus (*La clemenza di Tito*), Isolier (*Le Comte Ory*), Cherubino for Glyndebourne Touring, and Dorabella and Cherubino at the Glyndebourne Festival, and the title role in *Carmen* for Gubbay at the Royal Albert Hall in 2002 and 2005. Festivals include Festival Grec Barcelona with Christoph Rousset, Edinburgh Festival with Ivan Fischer. Imelda also has a wide oratorio repertoire. Awards include Esso and Richard Lewis – Jean Shanks Glyndebourne Awards. Recordings include: Hänsel for Channel 4 TV, *Jenifa* Makerras, *Falstaff* S4C and Mozart's *Coronation Mass* for Dublin Choral Foundation.



### EUGENE GINTY TENOR (UK) Snout

For Opera Ireland, Eugene Ginty has sung Howard Boucher in *Dead Man Walking* (2007) and the officer in *Ariadne Auf Naxos* (2008). In February he will sing the Drunken Cossack in *Mazeppa*. Having started singing whilst at Durham University, he has now played more than sixty operatic roles, making his American debut as Tamino in Boston in 1995. In Ireland he has performed many roles for OTC, and in May sang the tenor part in the opera *Van Gogh* for the Crash Ensemble at the Canberra Festival. In the UK he has worked for English National Opera, English Touring Opera, Opera North, Opera Holland Park, Garsington Opera, Almeida Opera, Opera Restored and Scottish Opera. Eugene's TV performances include *The Gondoliers* (1997). He is the tenor soloist on the CD recording of Michael Flatley's show *The Celtic Tiger*. Other recordings include *Der Rosenkavalier* (Major-Domo/Landlord) and *Il trovatore* (Messenger) for Chandos, and a live CD recording from the Barbican of *Tristan und Isolde* (Shepherd) with the BBC Symphony Orchestra released in 2006.



### **MARTIN HIGGINS BARITONE (IRELAND) *Starveling***

Martin Higgins made his Opera Ireland debut as Schaunard in 1993 and has since sung Silvio in *Pagliacci*, Duphol in *La traviata*, Kuligin in *Katya Kabanova*, Marullo in *Rigoletto* and Owen Hart in *Dead Man Walking*. He trained with Dr Veronica Dunne at Dublin's College of Music, with Carlo Bergonzi in Italy, and at the National Opera Studio in London. He has sung over thirty opera roles, including: Malatesta *Don Pasquale* (Castleward Opera), Guglielmo *Così fan tutte* (Scottish Opera), Schaunard *La Bohème* (Welsh National Opera), Don Alfonso *Così fan tutte* (Stowe), Enrico *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Marcello *La Bohème*, the title role in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and Giorgio Germont in *La traviata* (Glasgow), *Eugene Onegin* (Opera Interludes), Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly* and Sacristan in *Tosca* (Co-Opera, Ireland), Escamillo for Columbia Artists throughout the USA, Rambaldo *La rondine* (Anna Livia Opera Festival) Bartolo in both *The Marriage of Figaro* and *The Barber of Seville*, and Leporello in *Don Giovanni* (Cork Opera 2005 and Opera Theatre Company).



### **MARK MILHOFER TENOR (UK) *Lysander***

The versatile tenor Mark Milhofer has a repertoire that ranges from the Baroque to Benjamin Britten. Recent highlights have included appearances at La Fenice in Vivaldi's *Ercole sul Termondonte* and Puccini's *La rondine*, Offenbach's Orpheus for the Teatro Lirico Cagliari and Ferrando in the acclaimed Strehler production of *Così fan tutte* in Beijing and Moscow. After studies in Oxford and the GSMD, Mark joined AsLiCo opera studio Milan and was subsequently sang Don Ramiro in Parma conducted by Alberto Zedda. Further international engagements included Peter Quint in Malta, Don Narciso at the Teatro Regio Torino, Don Ramiro in Nantes and Angers, Belmonte in Bari, Pang in Macerata and Korea, Beppe in the Zeffirelli production of *Pagliacci* in Athens and the role of Jean Cocteau in the world premiere of Panni's *The Banquet* for Rome Opera. Recent and forthcoming engagements include roles in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for the Teatro Comunale Bologna, Belmonte for the Landestheater Salzburg, Bob Boles for the Teatro Regio Torino and the world premiere of *The Servant* at the Macerata Festival.



### **JOHN MOLLOY BASS (IRELAND) *Snug***

John Molloy, from Birr, studied at the DIT Conservatory of Music, Dublin and the Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester. In 2005 he graduated from the RNCM, receiving the college's highest accolade for performance; the PPRNCM Diploma. John has received Awards and Bursaries from the Arts Council of Ireland, the John McCormack Society, and was a major scholar of the Peter Moores Foundation from 2004 to 2006. He has performed extensively in opera and concert in Ireland, the UK, USA, Switzerland, Holland, China, Egypt and Australia. Recent performances include the title role in *The Marriage of Figaro* with OTC, Sarastro in *The Magic Flute* for Lyric Opera, Verdi's *Requiem* with Northern English Chorale and Haydn's *Creation* with Continuo Rotterdam. He performed the Australian premiere of Michael Gordon's *Van Gogh* – The Opera at this year's Canberra International Festival of Music and has just completed the "Irish Ring" cycle as Devilshoof in Balfé's *Bohemian Girl* for the Royal Dublin Society.



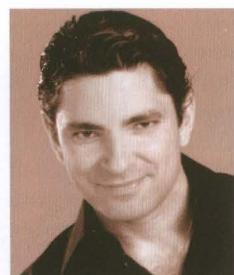
### FIONA MURPHY MEZZO-SOPRANO (IRELAND) *Hermia*

Dublin-born Fiona Murphy made her Opera Ireland debut as Glasha in *Katya Kabanova* in 1999. A graduate of UCD and the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, she was a finalist in the 2005 Hans Gabor Belevedere Competition and took part in the Operalia Competition, Madrid. She is also a Feis Ceol gold medalist and won the Olive Watson Young Singer Award in Belfast. She has performed with Wexford Festival Opera, OTC and the RIAM Opera Studio in both principal and supporting roles. With Houston Grand Opera she has sung Kate Pinkerton, The Fox (*The Little Prince*), Arete (*Lysistrata* – world premiere), Cherubino, Mercédès, Stephano, Zerlina under Summers, Hänsel in a new production of Humperdinck's opera directed by puppeteer Basil Twist and most recently Fox in *The Cunning Little Vixen*. Recent engagements include appearances with the Wolf Trap Opera Company singing Stephano and Eurydice (Telemann's *Orpheus*), the title role in *Carmen* with the Lyric Opera Productions Dublin and Minerva in *Il Ritorno d'Ulise* with Chicago Opera Theatre under Glover, and Carmen and Valencienne in *The Merry Widow* for ENO.



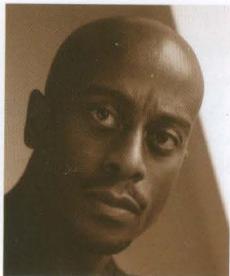
### GERARD O'CONNOR BASS (IRELAND) *Bottom*

Galway-born Gerard O'Connor has sung frequently with Opera Ireland, where he has participated in a number of Irish premieres: Varlaam in *Boris Godunov*, the Croucher in *The Silver Tassie*, Boris Izmaylov in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, and George Benton in *Dead Man Walking*. He has also sung Dikoi in *Katya Kabanova*, M  phistoph  l  s in Gounod's *Faust*, Benoit and Alcindoro in *La Boh  me*, and Marchese d'Obigny in *La traviata*. Elsewhere he has appeared with English National Opera, Opera North, Castleward Opera, Chelsea Opera Group, Garsington Opera, Longborough Festival Opera, Lyric Opera Dublin, Opera Holland Park, Opera Theatre Company and Singapore Lyric Opera, as well as at the Edinburgh and Wexford Festivals and at the RT   Proms. His repertoire has included Abbott (*Curlew River*), Raimondo (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), Priam (*The Trojans*), Zuniga (*Carmen*), Cieco (*Iris*), Sarastro (*Die Zauberfl  te*), Alidoro (*La Cenerentola*), Frank (*Die Fledermaus*), The Mayor (*Cherevichki*), Sparafucile (*Rigoletto*), Fafner (*Das Rheingold* and *Siegfried*), Reinmar (*Tannh  user*), King Marke (*Tristan und Isolde*) and Hunding (*Die Walk  re*).



### FLAVIO OLIVER COUNTER-TENOR (ITALY) *Oberon*

Brescia-born singer, actor and composer Flavio sang the role of Orfeo in Opera Ireland's 2004 production of Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*. Highlights of recent works include: Bernstein's *Missa Brevis* in Madrid; Donizetti's *Le convenienze e le inconvenienze teatrali* in Monte Carlo; Zelenka's *Sub Olea Pacis* at various European festivals, Gluck's *Orfeo* in Cordoba, Palacio de Festivales de Santander and the Wiesbaden Festival, Trujam  n in *El retablo de Maese Pedro* at the Teatro Nacional de la Zarzuela and Teatro Campoamor in Oviedo, Turina's *Don Quijote* in Barcelona and Madrid, Farnace in the Mitridate re di Ponto at the internacional festival of Granada Festival, Pirro in *The Andr  maca* by Martin y Soler in Valencia, and as Pierrot in *Pierrot Lunaire* in the International festival of A Coru  a. Oliver has collaborated with important conductors and stage directors such as Cruchfield, Holten, Marcon, G  mez Mart  nez, Minkowski, Garrido, Stubbs, Curtis, Temes, Robertson, Pons, Pascoe, DeTomassi, Sagi, Goren, Tambascio, Mario Pontiggia, Comedians and La Fura dels Baus amongst others.



### **HORACE OLIVER (UK) *Puck***

Horace Oliver trained at Sylvia Young's Theatre School. His TV and Film credits include George in *Casualty* (BBC1); Court Guard in *Judge John Deed* (BBC1); PC Grigg in *The Bill* (Thames TV); Bosco in *Brazen Hussies* (BBC1); Keith Evans in *Press Gang* (ITV/Euston Films); Oliver in *Grange Hill* (BBC1); Paul Francis in *The Boys from County Clare* (Ceilidh Productions); Barney in *Lost in London* (Merry Go Round Films); Hoffer in *Ellis Island* (Telepictures). Theatre credits include *Gone With The Wind* (New London Theatre) directed by Sir Trevor Nunn, Angel in *My One & Only* (Piccadilly Theatre, London); Lee in *Stand By Me* (West End & National Tour); *42nd Street* (Apollo Theatre, London); Little Moe in *Five Guys Named Moe* (Lyric Theatre, London); Razzmatazz in *Bugsy Malone* (Her Majesty's Theatre, London); Skippyop in *Porgy & Bess* (Glyndebourne Festival); Lion in *The Wizard of Oz* (Leicester Haymarket); Shaggy in *Poison* (Tricycle Theatre); Dink in *Carmen Jones* (The Old Vic & World Tour); The Duke in *Sophisticated Ladies* (The Globe).



### **SANDRA OMAN SOPRANO (IRELAND) *Helena***

Sandra Oman's most recent roles with Opera Ireland were Despina in *Così fan tutte*, Kitty Hart in *Dead Man Walking* and Papagena in *Die Zauberflöte*. She studied in Dublin with Edith Forrest and Alison Young, and with Graziella Sciutti, Carlo Bergonzi and Conor Farren. She has performed in Ireland, UK, USA, Faeroe Islands and Poland with Opera Ireland, Co-Opera, Holland Park Opera, Opera in the Open and Opera Interludes (UK). She sang Mozart's Susanna for Cork 2005 and for Lyric Opera at the NCH, where she has also appeared as Musetta, Gilda, Liu and Micaëla. Other roles in her repertoire include Mozart's Dorabella and Donna Elvira as well as parts in *Die Fledermaus*, *Albert Herring*, *Nabucco*, *Aida*, *Macbeth*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Suor Angelica*, *Die lustige Witwe*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *La Bohème*, *Don Carlo*, *Pagliacci*, *Idomeneo*, *L'elisir d'amore* and *Norma*. In 2004, the Vocal Heritage Society awarded Sandra the Margaret Burke-Sheridan Medal for her contribution to opera in Ireland. Future engagements include a nationwide concert tour with the Slovak Festival Orchestra in March 2009, and Micaëla in Dublin and Belfast.



### **PHILIP O'REILLY BASS (UK) *Theseus***

Philip O'Reilly was born in Coventry, England. He first studied engineering and worked in the motor industry for some years. He then embarked upon vocal study with Otokar Kraus, whilst working as a professional chorister in London. His operatic debut came with Don Magnifico in Glyndebourne Touring Opera's acclaimed production of Rossini's *La Cenerentola*. This led to regular appearances on stage with Glyndebourne, English National Opera, Opera North, Opera Northern Ireland, and internationally in houses as far flung as Reggio Emilia (where Pavarotti made his debut) to Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires. As a concert artist he has performed and recorded in more than fifty countries with many leading conductors and orchestras, and in festivals including Edinburgh, Salzburg, Granada, Tokyo and the BBC Promenade Concerts. He teaches voice at the Royal Irish Academy of Music in Dublin.



### **JEAN TEITGEN BASS (FRANCE) QUINCE**

After graduating as a Master of Economics at Université de Rouen, Jean Teitgen studied at the Paris Conservatoire, where he received a Prix de chant and a Diplôme de Formation Supérieure. He has sung Draco le Géant in Lully's *Cadmus et Hermione* in Toulouse and Versailles, Raimondo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* and Gremio in *Eugene Onegin* with Opéra Nomade. More recently, he has sung in *La clemenza di Tito* in Metz, *Die Zauberflöte* in Dijon, *I puritani* in Avignon, Sparafucile in Lausanne, *Vénus et Adonis* and *Wozzeck* at Opéra de Nancy, Zemlinsky's *König Kandaules* in Liège and Nancy, *The Rape of Lucretia* in Tours, *Fidelio* in Avignon, *Nabucco* in Toulon, *Pyrame et Thisbe* by Rebel and *Francœur* in Nantes and Stravinsky's *Noces* in Nancy, *Giulio Cesare* and *Ballo in Maschera* in Marseille, and *Pelleas et Mélisande* (the Doctor) at La Monnaie de Bruxelles. Upcoming engagements include Sparafucile in Nancy and Caen, Palemon and Don Alfonso in Saint-Etienne, *Simon Boccanegra* at the Opéra de Genève, *Fortunio* at the Opéra Comique, *Aïda* in Avignon and *Lucia* in Dijon.



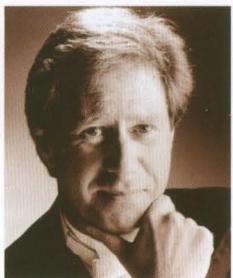
### **LOUISE WALSH SOPRANO (IRELAND) Tytania**

Dublin-born Louise Walsh made her Opera Ireland debut as Adele in *Die Fledermaus* in 1998 and returned as Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi* in 2005. She gained a BA (Hons) in Chemistry at Trinity College while also studying singing at the DIT College of Music. She later studied at the RNCM in Manchester and the National Opera Studio, London. A multiple-award winner, her career has taken her to the Staatsoper Stuttgart, Scottish Opera and Brussels' Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie as well as Opera Northern Ireland, OTC and Wexford Festival. Her repertoire embraces Serpina *La serva padrona*, Clarice *Il Mondo della Luna*, Mozart's Ilia, Susanna and Servilia, Puccini's Musetta, First Flowermaiden in *Parsifal*, La Fée *Cendrillon*, Amor *Orfeo ed Euridice*, Asteria in Handel's *Tamerlano* and Anne Trulove in *The Rake's Progress*. Concert appearances have included *Carmina Burana*, Mahler's *Symphony No. 2*, and the Requiems of Mozart, Fauré and Brahms. She is the first Irish singer to perform the role of Christine in *The Phantom of the Opera* in London's West End.



### **NYLE WOLFE BARITONE (IRELAND) Demetrius**

Nyle Wolfe, who made his Opera Ireland debut as Barney in *The Silver Tassie*, sang his first concert at the tender age of six performing Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer in his local Catholic Church. A simple "Sing and Get Paid for It!" ad in the *Irish Examiner* led to his professional debut in Cork's Opera House. He graduated at London's Royal Academy of Music with their highest academic award and won a scholarship to complete his training at Zurich's prestigious International Opera Studio. After thousands of performances in distinguished venues throughout Europe and North America, he has honed a reputation as one of the most talented vocalists of his generation. He has sung for international monarchs and presidents including Queen Elizabeth II, Bill Clinton and Taoiseach Brian Cowen. His debut album *Moodswings*, released in 2007 and distributed online, enhanced his enviable resume of live performances and has led to future engagements as far away as New Zealand and Antarctica. For more information visit [www.nylewolfe.com](http://www.nylewolfe.com)



### **STEWART ROBERTSON (SCOTLAND) CONDUCTOR**

Born in Scotland, Stewart Robertson is a graduate of the Royal Scottish Academy of Music. He studied piano with Denis Matthews, conducting with Otmar Suitner at the Mozarteum in Salzburg and with Hans Swarowsky in Vienna. In addition to his position as Music Director and Principal Conductor of Florida Grand Opera, he is also Music Director of the Atlantic Classical Orchestra, Artistic Director of Opera Omaha, and has recently been named Music Director Emeritus of Glimmerglass Opera in recognition of the phenomenal musical growth the company has achieved under his direction over the last two decades. He has led performances with orchestras as diverse as the Netherlands Symphony Orchestra, Mecklenburg Staatskapelle, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Buenos Aires Philharmonic and the Sicily Symphony Orchestra. Recently Robertson conducted the world premiere of Federico II by Marco Tutino at the Jesi Opera Festival in Italy and The Greater Good by Stephen Hartke at Glimmerglass Opera. In October he conducted Richard Rodney Bennett's *Mines of Sulphur* at the new Wexford Opera House.



### **DAVID BOLGER (IRELAND) DIRECTOR & CHOREOGRAPHER**

David Bolger, who directed Opera Ireland's *Orfeo and Euridice* in 2004 and Handel's *Imeneo* in 2005, is the co-founder and Artistic Director of CoisCéim Dance Theatre, with whom he has performed worldwide. He co-wrote and choreographed the film *Hit and Run* which won several major international awards. He was also nominated for the American Choreography Award, LA. In June 2003 he created *A Dash of Colour*, a four-minute dance sequence involving 75,000 people, for the Opening Ceremony at the Special Olympics held in Dublin. As a freelance choreographer, David Bolger has worked in theatre, opera and film in Ireland and overseas. His credits include *Pirates of Penzance* in Minneapolis and *Playboy of the Western World* for Druid. He choreographed the dances for the 1998 film *Dancing at Lughnasa* as well as for the world premiere of Nicholas Maw's opera *Sophie's Choice* at Covent Garden in December 2002. Future projects for CoisCéim include *Boxes*, a duet for two men, which will tour Ireland in the New Year. He has just completed writing a dance film that will go into pre-production in the spring of 2009.



### **MONICA FRAWLEY (IRELAND) SET & COSTUME DESIGNER**

For Opera Ireland she has designed *Orfeo and Euridice*, *Imeneo* and *A Streetcar Named Desire*. This year she designed the two Stewart Parker plays, *Spokesong* and *Pentecost* for Rough Magic's Parker Project and *The Sanctuary Lamp* for B\*spoke Theatre Company. She is currently designing *I Puritani* by Bellini for Opera Nuremberg and *The Giant Blue Hand* by Marina Carr for the Ark Children's Theatre. Monica has won three Irish Times/ESB theatre awards for design. She has worked at the Abbey, Druid, Rough Magic, the National theatre in London and with many other companies in Ireland and Britain. Recent work includes *King Ubu* (Fine Swine Productions and Galway Arts Festival), *The Taming of the Shrew* for Rough Magic, costume design for the American premier of Friel's *The Home Place* at the Guthrie Theatre, Minneapolis and *Out of Harm's Way*, a dance piece for Theater Freiburg in Germany. Monica was born in Dublin and is a graduate of the NCAD and Central St. Martin's School of Art, London.



### **SINÉAD MCKENNA (IRELAND) LIGHTING DESIGNER**

Sinéad is currently designing *La traviata* for Malmö Opera. Recent work includes *New Electric Ballroom* (Druid), *The Parker Project*, *Life is a Dream*, *Attempts on Her Life*, *Dream of Autumn* and *Improbable Frequency* (Rough Magic), *The Burial at Thebes*, *Howie The Rookie* and *Finders Keepers* (Abbey), *Private Lives* (Gate), *Last Days of The Celtic Tiger* and *Blackbird* (Landmark), *Honor* (B\*Spoke), *Macbeth*, *Philadelphia Here I Come*, *Othello* and *How Many Miles to Babylon* (Second Age) and *Henceforward* (Derby Playhouse). She designed *Ladies and Gents* – Best Lighting Design at Irish Theatre Awards – (Semper Fi), *Skinddeep*, *Scenes from a Watercooler*, *The Real Thing* and *Dinner with Friends* (Guna Nua), *Candide* and *The Butterfly Ranch* (Performance Corporation), *Shooting Gallery* (Bedrock), *The Snow Queen* and *Merry Christmas Betty Ford* (Lyric Theatre), *The Woman Who Walked into Doors* (Upbeat Productions), *Diarmuid and Grainne* (Passion Machine), *Swept* (CoisCéim), *As a Matter of Fact* (DTI), *I, Keano* (Lane Productions), *La Bohème* (Co-Opera), *Bovinity* (Tommy Tiernan), *Tongues and Fitting In* (Des Bishop) and Neil Delamere at Vicar Street.



### **EMMA O'KANE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (IRELAND)**

Emma O'Kane trained at the Perm State Choreographic Institute in Russia. She has worked with the Nizhny Novgorod State Theatre of Opera and Ballet, Russia; Catapult Dance Company, Dance Theatre of Ireland and has performed with Opera Ireland in *Orfeo ed Euridice*, *Imeneo* and *La Cenerentola*. Emma has been a member of CoisCéim Dance Theatre since 2001 performing in *The Rite of Spring*, *Mermaids*, *Chamber Made*, *Nutcracker*, *Knots*, *Out of Harm's Way*, *Hanging on by a Thread* and *Dodgems*, which premiered at this year's Dublin Theatre Festival. Other work with CoisCéim includes the Opening Ceremonies of The Special Olympics and Ryder Cup and for the Bealtaine Festival 2008 *Too Young to Be Old* – a dance piece for older people. Most recently she choreographed *Rock, Paper, Scissors* for the Dublin Fringe Festival. Other choreographic work includes *The Crock of Gold*, Storytellers Theatre Company, *At Peace*, Upstate Theatre, *Scenes from Family Life*, RYT @ PerformanceLab and *Balor*, IADT for St. Patricks Festival which she co-choreographed.

### **AOIFE O'SULLIVAN REPETITEUR (IRELAND)**

Aoife O'Sullivan, who was repetiteur for Opera Ireland's *Dead Man Walking*, studied in Dublin and at the Mozarteum in Salzburg, Centro Studi Italiani and the Max Reger Tage in Germany. She was a Fulbright scholar at the Curtis Institute of Music with Mikael Eliasen, Head of Music and Opera. In 2001 she joined the staff there for her final two years. She has played for masterclasses given by Ann Murray, Thomas Allen, Thomas Hampson and Anna Moffo and worked on *Zaide* at the Britten Pears Young Artist Programme and *Turn of the Screw* for the Cheltenham Festival. She has appeared at the Wigmore Hall in concerts with Ann Murray, Gweneth Ann Jeffers and Wendy Dawn Thompson and will return this year with Sinead Campbell and Allan Clayton. A winner of the 2005 Geoffrey Parsons Trust Award, she has worked at Wexford Festival Opera and OTC as well the National Opera Studio in London for the last two years. She is currently a coach at the RIAM in Dublin.

## THE CHILDREN OF THE INDEPENDENT THEATRE WORKSHOP



### KEVIN BATES COBWEB

Kevin is 12 years old and is in sixth class in Scoil Mhuire. He has been with the Independent Theatre Workshop for the past year and loves it. He played the leading role in *Oliver* last Christmas in the National Concert Hall and had a great time. His main hobbies are football, swimming and reading. He is learning the piano once a week with his Dad and loves the duets. He is enjoying being part of *A Midsummer Nights Dream*.



### JOSHUA BROWN MOTH

Joshua is 10 years old and has been in the Independent Theatre Workshop since he was 4! He enjoys his dance and drama classes but really loves his singing. He has appeared in commercials for Dunnes Stores and Mace and played one of Fagin's Boys in *Oliver* at the National Concert Hall last Christmas. Joshua also learns Violin and is a member of his school Orchestra. He is loving his time with Opera Ireland and is going to do his school project on Shakespeare, with a special section on *A Midsummer Nights Dream*!



### AIDAN FITZPATRICK PEASEBLOSSOM

Aidan Fitzpatrick is 10 years old and he is thrilled that he will be celebrating his 11th birthday on stage at the Gaiety Theatre on the 18th of November. He only just started classes at the Independent Theatre Workshop in September and is really enjoying the experience. Aidan attends St Marys College, Rathmines. He likes rugby and he is learning to play the drums. Previously he has starred in school plays such as *Fiends Reunited*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *A Dancing Christmas Party*.



### BEN MIDDLETON MUSTARDSEED

Ben is 8 and attends St Patricks Cathedral Choir School and is in 3rd class. Ben has several theatre credits to date including Tiny Tim in *A Christmas Carol* at the Gate, The Boy in *Madame Butterfly* and childrens' chorus in *Carmen* for Lyric Opera in the National Concert Hall, the young Prince in *Trojan Women* for City Theatre and one of Fagin's gang in *Oliver* for Festival Productions in the NCH. Ben loves his weekly classes in the Independent Theatre Workshop and also enjoys Gaelic, Football, Hurling and Tennis.

# THE INDEPENDENT THEATRE WORKSHOP

ITW was started by Gillian Oman in 1993 and now has schools in Ranelagh and Drumcondra offering classes in all aspects of the performing arts. We run weekly classes during term time and intensive courses during the summer holidays catering for boys and girls of all ages and abilities. Our primary objective is to build confidence and creativity and to provide a social forum for our students to make friends for life. We cover a wide range of Drama, Singing and Dance styles and hope to encourage a love of the arts in all its forms. ITW have a busy agency too and the children have worked extensively in Feature Films, Television, Opera and Theatre. Our children loved working on *Turandot* and *Dead Man Walking* last year and are delighted to be back in the Gaiety with Opera Ireland in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.



[www.independent-theatre-workshop.com](http://www.independent-theatre-workshop.com) or Telephone: 01 496 8808 for more information



*The children's chorus from the Independent Theatre Workshop*

Lara Jane Brennan, Jordan Brown, Greg Davis, Julie Davis, Meadhbh Fitzgearld, Karl Hannigan, Jasmin Huysmans, Becky Hynes, Niamh Kelly, Sarah Kelly, Sarah Lavelle, Joey Leddy, Alison Stewart Lord, Serena O'Connor, Amy O'Donoghue



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#### Ladies

Debboragh Abbott  
Michaela Chirvase  
Sarah Dolan  
Helen Hutchinson  
Katy Kelly  
Hannah Macaulay  
Anne Murray  
Jolanta Simaityte  
Grainne Stafford

#### Gentlemen

Kate Allen  
Sarah Cronin  
Chloe Hinton  
Milena Ivanova  
Rozenne Le Chevallier  
Nicola Mulligan  
Morana Plesé  
Helen Smith

Georgi Dimitrov  
Billy Kilkenny  
Niall McGrath  
Richard Shaffrey  
Ian Whyte

Robert Duff  
Colm Lalor  
Peter O'Donoghue  
Wojciech Smarkala  
Jacek Wislocki



WEDNESDAY 7 JANUARY

# GOLDEN MELODIES FROM OPERA *and* OPERETTA

Celine Byrne *soprano*

John Molloy *bass-baritone*

David Brophy *conductor*

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SUNDAY 8 FEBRUARY

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Chorus of the Glasnevin Musical Society

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## MADAMA BUTTERFLY

### Violin I

Mia Cooper (leader)  
Gillian Williams (co-leader)  
Pamela Forde  
Eileen Comer  
Sunniva Fitzpatrick  
Ruth Murphy  
Sebastian Petiet  
Larissa O'Grady

### Violin II

Elizabeth Leonard  
Clare McKeown  
Anne Phelan  
Carol Quigley  
Arthur McIver  
Donal Roche

### Viola

Nicole Fischer  
Elizabeth O'Neill  
Katherine Barneycutt  
Karen Dervan

### Cello

David James  
Hilary O'Donovan  
Yue Tang  
Margaret Doris

### Double Bass

Seamus Doyle  
Liam Wylie

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Kieran Moynihan  
Alice Nolan  
Marie Comiskey

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Rebecca Halliday

### Cor Anglais

David Agnew

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John Forde

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Jean Duncan

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Brian Daly

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Eamonn Nolan  
Eoin Daly

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David Weakley

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### Timpani

Daniel Bertschi

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Noel Eccles  
Bernard Reilly  
Lloyd Byrne

### Harp

Geraldine O'Doherty

### BANDA

Percussion  
Stephen Kelly

## A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

### Violin I

Mia Cooper (leader)  
Pamela Forde (co-leader)  
Eileen Comer  
Sunniva Fitzpatrick  
Ruth Murphy  
Sebastian Petiet  
Katie O'Connor  
Guangyue Du

### Violin II

Elizabeth Leonard  
Clare McKeown  
Anne Phelan  
Carol Quigley  
Arthur McIver  
Donal Roche

### Viola

Nicole Fischer  
Elizabeth O'Neill  
Katherine Barneycutt  
Catriona O'Hora

### Cello

David James  
Hilary O'Donovan  
Yue Tang  
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### Double Bass

Seamus Doyle  
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### Flute

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### Bassoon

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### French Horn

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### Trumpet

Shaun Hooke

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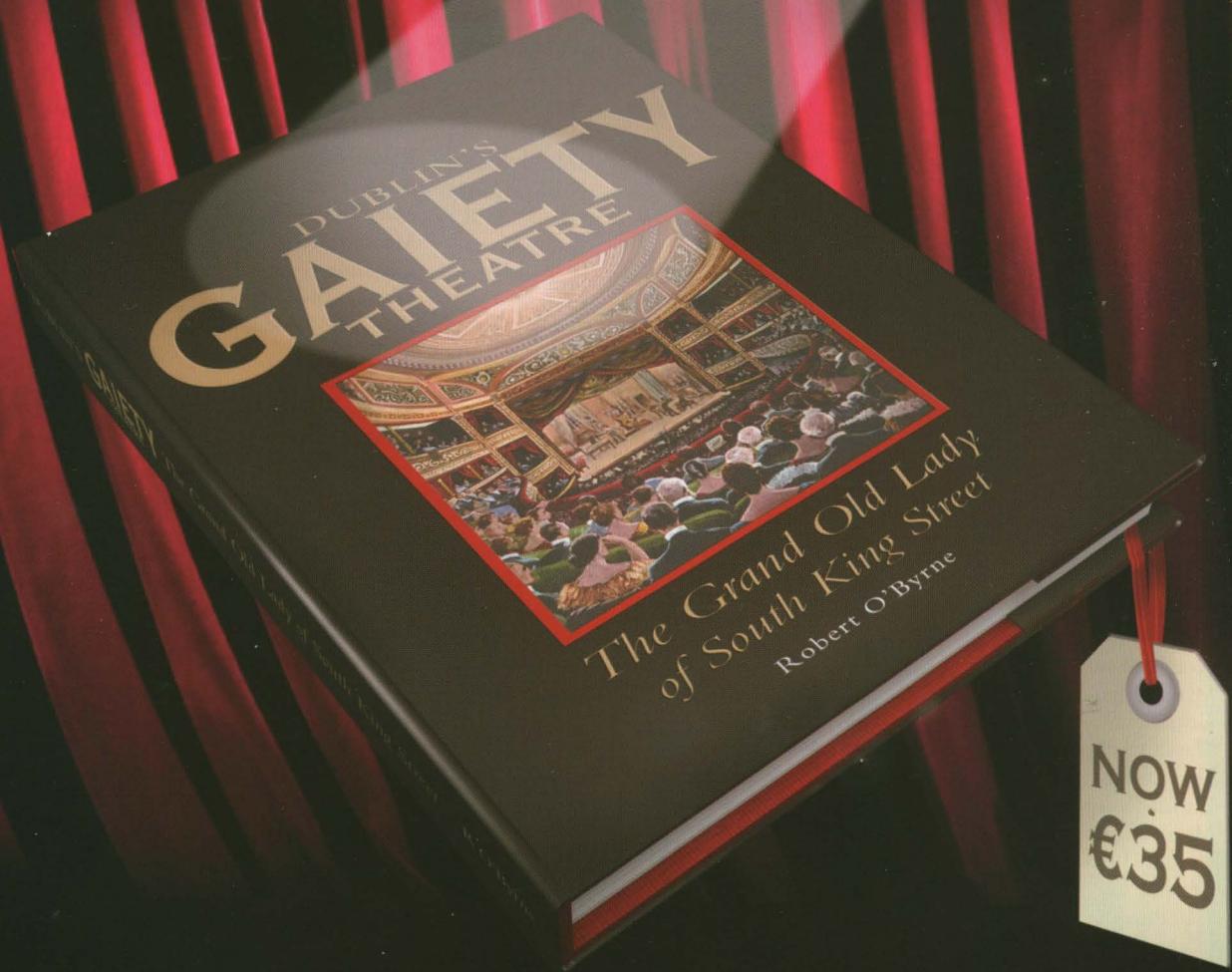
Mary O'Donnell  
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Mary Spollen  
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John Tierney

Mary Tierney  
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Mary Toner  
Mary Troy  
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Lily Tully  
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Sheila Tyrell  
Ada Wall  
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Kevin Walsh  
Edward Walsh  
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Brendan Ward  
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## DGOS/OPERA IRELAND PRODUCTIONS 1941 - 2008



<b>A</b>				
<b>Allegro, Salvatore</b>				
Ave Maria	1959			
Il medico suo malgrado	1962			
<b>B</b>				
<b>Balfe, Michael W</b>				
The Bohemian Girl	1943			
<b>Beethoven, Ludwig van</b>				
Fidelio	1954 1994			
<b>Bellini, Vincenzo</b>				
La sonnambula	1960 1963			
Norma	1955 2003			
I puritani	1975			
<b>Britten, Benjamin</b>				
Peter Grimes	1990			
<b>Bizet, Georges</b>				
Carmen	1941 2002			
Les pêcheurs de perles	1964 1987			
<b>C</b>				
<b>Charpentier, Gustave</b>				
Louise	1979			
<b>Cilea, Francesco</b>				
Adriana Lecouvreur	1967 1980			
<b>Cimarosa, Domenico</b>				
Il matrimonio segreto	1961			
<b>D</b>				
<b>Debussy, Claude</b>				
Pelléas et Mélisande	1948			
<b>Delibes, Léo</b>				
Lakmé	1993			
<b>Donizetti, Gaetano</b>				
Don Pasquale	1987 2007			
L'eliser d'amore	1958 1996			
La favorita	1942 1982			
La figlia del reggimento	1978			
Lucia Di Lammermoor	1955 1991			
<b>F</b>				
<b>Flotow, Friedrich von</b>				
Martha	1982 1992			
<b>G</b>				
<b>Giordano, Umberto</b>				
Andrea Chénier	1957 2002			
Fedora	1959			
<b>Gluck, Christoph W</b>				
Orfeo ed Euridice	1960 2004			
<b>Gounod, Charles</b>				
Faust	1941 2006			
Roméo et Juliette	1945			
<b>H</b>				
<b>Handel, George F</b>				
Giulio Cesare	2001			
Messiah	1942			
Imeneo	2005			
<b>Heggie, Jake</b>				
Dead Man Walking	2007			
<b>Humperdinck, Engelbert</b>				
Hänsel und Gretel	1943 1994			
<b>J</b>				
<b>Janácek, Leos</b>				
Jenůfa	1973 2004			
Katya Kabanova	2000			
<b>L</b>				
<b>Lehár, Franz</b>				
The Merry Widow	1997			
<b>Leoncavallo, Ruggiero</b>				
Pagliacci	1941 1998			
<b>M</b>				
<b>Mascagni, Pietro</b>				
L'Amico Fritz	1952			
Cavalleria Rusticana	1941 1998			

<b>Massenet, Jules</b>		
Manon	1952	1980
Werther	1967	1977

<b>Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus</b>		
Così fan tutte	1993	2007
Don Giovanni	1943	2003
Idomeneo	1956	
Die Entführung Aus		
Dem Serail	1949	1964
Le Nozze di Figaro	1942	1997 2008
Die Zauberflöte	1990	2005

<b>Mussorgsky, Modest</b>		
Boris Godunov		1999

<b>O</b>		
<b>Offenbach, Jacques</b>		

Les contes D'Hoffman 1945 1998

<b>P</b>		
<b>Puccini, Giacomo</b>		
La Bohème	1996	2006
Gianni Schicchi	1962	2005
Madama Butterfly	1942	2000
Manon Lescaut	1958	1991
Suor Angelica	1962	
Tosca	1941	2004
Turandot	1957	1986 2007

<b>Previn, André</b>		
A Streetcar Named Desire		2006

<b>R</b>		
<b>Refice, Lifinio</b>		
Cecilia		1954
<b>Rossini, Gioachino</b>		

Il barbiere di Silviglia 1942 1999  
 La Cenerentola 1972 2006  
 L'italiana in Algeri 1978 1992

<b>S</b>		
<b>Saint-Saëns, Camille</b>		

Samson et Dalila 1942 1979

<b>Shostakovich, Dmitri</b>		
Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk		2000

<b>Smetana, Bedrich</b>		
The Bartered Bride	1953	1976

<b>Strauss, Johann</b>		
Die Fledermaus	1962	1988
Der Zigeunerbaron	1964	1977

<b>Strauss, Richard</b>		
Der Rosenkavalier	1964	1984
Salomé		1999
Ariadne Auf Naxos		2008

<b>T</b>		
<b>Thomas, Ambroise</b>		

Mignon 1966 1973

<b>Tchaikovsky, Peter Illich</b>		
Eugene Onegin	1969	1997
The Queen of Spades	1972	2002

<b>Turnage, Mark Anthony</b>		
The Silver Tassie		2001

<b>V</b>		
<b>Verdi, Giuseppe</b>		
Aida	1942	2000
Un ballo in maschera	1949	1992
Don Carlo	1950	2001
Ernani	1965	1978
Falstaff	1960	1998
La forza del destino	1951	1973
Macbeth	1963	1997
Nabucco	1962	1986
Otello	1946	1981
Rigoletto	1941	2004
Simon Boccanegra	1956	1974
La traviata	1999	2005
Il trovatore	1941	1995

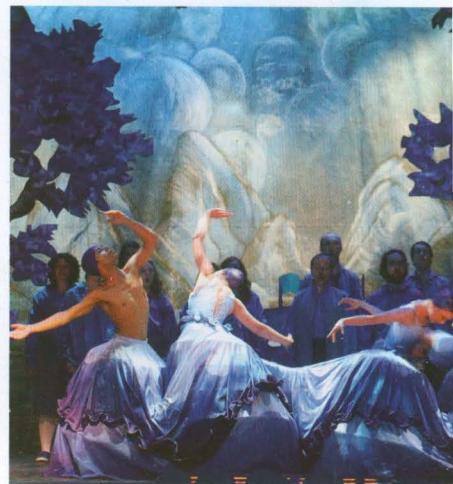
<b>Victory, Gerard</b>		
Music Hath Mischief		1968

<b>W</b>		
<b>Wagner, Richard</b>		
Der Fliegende Holländer	1946	2001
Lohengrin	1971	1983
Tannhäuser	1943	1977
Tristan und Isolde	1953	1963
Die Walküre		1956

<b>Wolf- Ferrari, Ermanno</b>		
Il segreto di Susanna		1956

<b>Z</b>		
<b>Zemlinsky, Alexander von</b>		

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